EDWARD W. BLYDEN, 1832 - 1912,

AND PAN - NEGRO NATIONALISM

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PREFACE

Formal Pan-Africanism came into being at the very dawn of the twentieth century: in July 1900 for three days thirty delegates mainly from the United States and the West Indies, and with one representative from each of the two then independent African states - Liberia and Ethiopia - met in London at the first Pan-African Conference to discuss common problems and suggest remedial measures. During the following half century, five more Pan-African Conferences were organized: and at the last of these, held at Manchester in 1945, Africans were well represented for the first time, and played an important past in the deliberations. Among the Africans was Kwame Nkrumah, who was together with the late George Padmore, West Indian propagandist and the foremost twentieth century theoretician of Pan-Africanism, Joint-Secretary of that Conference. It was through Nkrumah's influence in an independent Ghana that Pan-Africanism was first established on African soil (1958). In doing so, the movement lost its hitherto exclusive racial basis and became a non-racial, continental and strategic movement.

But the roots of Pan-Africanism go back to the early nineteenth century. The common problems which had brought Negroes from various countries together in 1900: exploitation and discrimination in the New World and concern for the comparative backwardness of Africa, had caused, as early as the first third of the 19th century, such Negro leaders as Paul Cuffee, John Kizzell, Daniel Coker, Lott Cary and John Russwurm to advocate a

pan-Negro solution: New World Negro repatriation and the building up of progressive African states as a necessary prerequisite to bringing respect and prestige to the Negro race. The second half of the nineteenth century also had representatives of this school of thought, among them, Bishop Henry M. Turner, J. Albert Thorne, and Henry Sylvestre Williams, the man who organized the first pan-African Conference in 1900. But undoubtedly, the most outstanding pan-Negro nationalist of the nineteenth century was Edward Wilmot Blyden, who devoted his entire adult life with unexampled single-mindedness to promoting measures which he hoped would uplift the race in the eyes of the world. To study his ideas and activities is to show unmistakeably that the concept of Pan-Africanism is not a twentieth century invention, and to prove that there is much in common between his ideas and those of modern-day African nationalists: the concept of Negritude, the very use of the phrase the "African Personality", the attempt to discover a worthy African past, to promote pride in African culture and foster greater political groupings in Africa. But if Blyden's pan-Negro nationalism was one of the main historical progenitors of Pan-Africanism, it is in Marcus Garvey's Back-to-Africa Movement that the full heritage of his ideas is to be found.

It is perhaps strange that scholars of the Negro and Africa had long neglected to study the career of Blyden, but it is easily understandable why there is now among them, as well as mong many enlightened Negroes on both sides of the Atlantic, great interest in him.

I am grateful to Professor John D. Fage, under whose supervision I

began my research, and to Mr. D. H. Jones, who saw my work brought to a conclusion, for their valuable criticisms and encouragement. One is always grateful, too, to one's fellow students with whom one exchanges ideas, and who, in one's moments of frustration and despair, are usually sympathetic.

My research took me to the United States for six months in the summer and fall of 1962. This was made possible by a travel grant from the Central Research Fund of the University of London, and the British Commonwealth Scholarship Commission generously continuing my living allowance during my absence from Britain; to both these bodies I am grateful. I would like to thank, too, Professor George Shepperson for providing me with the names of valuable contacts in the United States. In particular, I benefitted from two meetings with Miss Edith Holden of Greenwich, Connecticut, whose interest in Blyden is almost lifelong and who has collected an extensive amount of material on him. For her help, too, I am grateful.

NOTE: In this thesis the abbreviations A.C.S., C.M.S. and P.B.F.M. stand, respectively, for American Colonization Society, Church Missionary Society and Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.

A B S T R A C T

This thesis examines the pan-Negro ideas and activities of one of the most outstanding Negro intellectuals of the nineteenth century - Edward Wilmot Blyden. Convinced that Negroes would never achieve equality with whites in the New World, he emigrated to Liberia at the age of eighteen, and became an ardent advocate of New World Negro emigration to Africa. He had envisaged Liberia as the nucleus of a progressive African state and had hoped that its jurisdiction and influence would spread in West Africa. In his various capacities as clergyman, High School Principal, College Professor and President, politician and ambassador, he sought to enhance the prestige of the Negro Republic. Blyden also worked for many years in Sierra Leone and Lagos, where, both as a private individual and as an employee of the Government, he sought to promote education among Christians as well as Muslims. One of his aims was to unite West Africans into one community and nation.

In his attempt to bring respect and dignity to the Negro race, he became a tireless vindicator of the Negro past and of African culture; he criticized Christianity (in practice) as a demoralizing influence on the Negro; but praised Islam in Africa as a unifying and elevating force. He had hoped that Africa's regeneration would come through the influence of returning New World Negroes; but also regarded European nations in Africa as working ultimately for the good of that continent. So concerned was he with proving the merit of the Negro race that from the early 1870's he

insisted that only "pure Negroes" should emigrate to Africa to participate in the new dispensation: he believed the Negro race to have special and inherent attributes which would manifest itself in a great civilization in Africa. Because none of his cherished schemes came to fruition in his life-time, it is primarily as a man of ideas that he owes his historical significance.

In discussing his pan-Negro natinnalism, I have made use of both the chronological and the thematic approaches. An introduction examines the historical origins of pan-Negro nationalism and provides a background for the examination of Blyden's own ideas.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Historical Origins of Pan-Negro Nationalism

The phenomenon of pan-Negro nationalism first manifested itself in the early years of the nineteenth century and had its origins in the humiliating experiences of New World Negroes, the growing libertarian and humanitarian sentiments of the age, and the rising spirit of nationalism everywhere. Pan-Negro nationalism was characterized by:

a) A conviction of the oneness of problems and goals of people of Negro origin everywhere;

b) acceptance of the necessity for migration or emigration and the desire to set up strong Negro states in Africa, the Americas itself, or both, to demonstrate the Negro's ability to create a worthy civilization and thus bring respect and dignity to the race;

c) the desire for commercial cooperation and cultural intercourse between black Africans and New World Negroes.

d) an identification with Africa, an attempt to claim for it a glorious early history, and a desire to see that continent "regenerated" and brought to the fore as a world power and civilization.

It was first Haiti that might have provided the focus for a pan-Negro programme. The slaves of that colonial territory, inspired

by the liberal and egalitarian ideas of the French Revolution, had heroically overthrown their oppressors and had wrung independence from the reluctant hands of the greatest military power in Europe, to become the second sovereign state (1804) in all the Americas. The new Negro "Empire", fresh from its triumphs, showed consciousness of its responsibility to the Negro race when it invited members in the Americas to Haiti to co-operate in building a model Negro state as the final, convincing answer to assertions of Negro inferiority.[1] This did not come to pass. Faced with powerful enemies from without,[2] and consumed with internal conflicts,[3] Haiti failed to fulfil its promise. But even so, it remained for many Negroes proof of Negro ability and a source of hope for a better future for the race.

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[1]James Redpath (ed.), A Guide to Haiti (Boston, 1861), see preface and p. 104. In 1824 a few hundred American Negroes did emigrate to Haiti, but the scheme proved unsuccessful. See Loring D. Dewey, Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti of the Free People of Color (New York, 1824).

[2]Haiti lived in dread that France might attempt to reclaim her as a colony: in addition, there were elements in the United States and England who regarded Haiti's independence as a dangerous example to Negro slaves in the Southern States and the West Indies. See R.W. Logan, The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti 1776-1891 (Chapel Hill, 1941), passim.

[3]There was a continuing conflict between blacks and mulattoes, and from 1807 to 1820, Haiti was actually divided into two parts with two heads of state. See James G. Leyburn, The Haitian People (New Haven, 1941), passim.

Of course, many New World Negroes had maintained a sentimental attachment to Africa. It is noteworthy that practically all Negro organizations formed in the United States up to about the third decade of the nineteenth century had the word "African" in their titles.[4] And among the Negroes in Britain, set free by Lord Mansfield's judicial decision in 1772, there were a few enlightened enough to advocate in writing what was essentially the point of view of British evangelicals and humanitarians, namely, that Britain should exert itself to stop the slave trade, replace it by legitimate commerce, and help to christianize and civilize Africa.[5] It was, too, the representations of these Negroes of Britain, destitute in an inhospitable climate, which had induced the British to found the colony of Sierra Leone in 1787, the Negroes themselves forming the great majority of the 411 emigrants which had embarked from Britain.[6] Less than two years after the first emigrants landed, the Free African Society of

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[4] Some examples are: Prince Hall's African Lodge No. 1; the Free African Society of Philadelphia and Newport, R.I.; the African Institutions of New York and Philadelphia; the various African Baptist churches, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. From about the third decade when most American Negro leaders became convinced that the American Colonization Society (founded 1817) wished forcibly to deport Negroes to Africa, the title "African" becomes less popular among them and was replaced by "Colored".

[5] See Ignatius Sancho's Letters (London, 1782); Ottobah Cugoano, Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery (London, 1787); and Gustavus Vassa, The interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African (London, 1789).

[6] R. R. Kuczynski, Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire (London, 1948), 40-43; also Christopher Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, (London, 1962), 13-19.

Newport, Rhode Island, expressed itself interested in the colony; and in 1795 sent out a delegate to prospect.[7] Sierra Leone also attracted Negroes from Nova Scotia, Canada, where they had been settled after fighting on the side of the British in the War of the American Revolution. Anxious to leave behind an uncongenial climate and society, 1131 of them, led by Thomas Peters, a millwright, who had negotiated with the directors of the Sierra Leone Company on their behalf, and David George, a Baptist preacher full of missionary zeal, emigrated to the "colony of Freedom" in 1792. Both Peters and George can be regarded as the prototype of those New World Negro leaders who, throughout the nineteenth century and up to the time of Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement in the 1920's[8] sought to lead Negroes out of "bondage" and back to the "fatherland" of Africa.

Moreover, the arrival of the Nova Scotians, saved the colony, whose beginnings had been disastrous, from possible complete dissolution. The colony received a further accession of strength in 1800 with the coming of 532 Maroons who had taken part in a revolt in Jamaica, been transported to Nova Scotia and then elected to emigrate to Sierra Leone. In 1807 the British Government outlawed the slave trade and on January 1, 1808 assumed from the Sierra Leone Company direct

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[7]Christopher Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 112; also Charles H. Wesley, Richard Allen, Apostle of Freedom (Washington 1935), 66-7.

[8]See Edmund David Cronon, Black Moses (Madison, 1955).

control of the colony which was to be used as a centre for the suppression of the slave trade in West Africa as well as for depositing and civilizing liberated Africans. In 1804, the Church Missionary Society, the product of lay and religious altruism, began missionary and educational work in the colony. Thus, Sierra Leone had become the centre of British humanitarian activities in West Africa. By 1808 Sierra Leone had a population of nearly two thousand westernized Negroes - and the colony which had been founded as a practical solution to problems faced by British-protected Negroes had become a logical focus for further New World Negro emigration to Africa.

And even in the early years of the nineteenth century there were already signs that the free American Negro might have to seek a home outside the United States, for those years saw a sharp decline in his fortune. The invention and use of cotton gin in the last years of the eighteenth century and the subsequent remarkable spread of the cotton kingdom to the south and southwest, had served to reenergize the hitherto waning institution of slavery. Manumission of slaves which had not been infrequent in the years following the War of the American Revolution, had come to a virtual end in the South by the turn of the century. The relatively large free Negro population[9] which had

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[9]In 1800 there were 108,435 free Negroes in the United States. By 1830 this had risen, mainly by natural increase to 319,599, and to 488,070 by 1860. The free Negro population remained at roughly one-tenth of the entire Negro population. See Negro Population of the United States, Bureau of Census (Washington, 1918), 57.

grown up was regarded by the white South as an anomaly in and a threat to its society. In the North Negroes fared no better:[10] although by 1804, all slavery had been here abolished, Negroes were not accepted as an integral part of American society. And as the South in its new earnestness as a slave society began taking measures intended to facilitate the return of the free Negroes to slavery or drive them out, the North, fearful of an influx, vied with the South in making their lives difficult.

But despite the ever-growing discrimination against them, the overwhelming majority of American Negroes, at least in the first half of the nineteenth century, continued to assert their rights as American citizens. They had, for instance, looked upon the efforts of the American Colonization Society,[11] founded in 1817 ostensibly for the humanitarian purpose of colonizing in Africa free American Negroes - an under-privileged and down-trodden group - as a hardly disguised attempt on the part of slave-holders, who were prominently associated with the organization, to rid the United States of a potentially troublesome element and thus make secure the Southern system of slavery.[12] From

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[10] For an elaboration of this thesis, see Leon F. Litwack, North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1862 (Chicago, 1962).

[11] For the history of the Society, see Early Lee Fox, The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840 (Baltimore, 1919); and P. J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865 (New York, 1961).

[12] See Louis B. Mehlinger, "The Attitude of the Free Negro Toward Colonization", Journal of Negro History, 1 (July, 1916).

1830 they met in national conventions to denounce slave-holders and the American Colonization Society and to declare their determination to fight for their civic rights; Negro nationalism derived from this determination.[13] This Negro anti-colonizationist and abolitionist movement was joined by Northern white liberals, led by William Lloyd Garrison, who waged an aggressive campaign against Southern slavery: this clash between North and South was to culminate in the American Civil War.

If continued discrimination against Negroes had inspired among them a group nationalism with its aim of complete integration within American society, it was also responsible for the appearance of the phenomenon of pan-Negro nationalism. In the first half of the nineteenth century, there were at least half a dozen major representatives of the pan-Negro ideology: Paul Cuffee, Daniel Coker, John Kizzell, Lott Cary, Elijah Johnson and John B. Russwurm.[14] Despairing of becoming first class citizens of the United States, they all became advocates of New World Negro emigration to Africa,

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[13] See John W. Cromwell, "The Early Negro Convention Movement", Occasional Papers, IX (Washington, 1904); August Meier, "The Emergence of Negro Nationalism", Midwest Journal, IV (Winter, 1951-52), 96-104; and Howard H. Bell, A Survey of the Negro Convention Movement, 1830-1861 (Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University, 1953).

[14] This is not meant to be an exhaustive list: the six were chosen because they were articulate and or outstanding men of action. Such a name as Colin Teage, closely associated with Lott Cary as one of the outstanding early emigrants of Liberia might be added. For a discussion of American Negro pro-colonization views in this period see Mehlinger, op.cit.

held visions of that continent regenerated, and all but Cuffee died in the service of the newly established Negro settlements in West Africa.

Cuffee was a devout Quaker from Massachusetts who became a prosperous trader and shipowner.[15] From early he had championed the civic rights of Negroes in his native state, and when this met with scant success, he turned his thoughts to Africa and particularly to Sierra Leone. Cuffee wanted to work for the "improvement and civilization of the blacks" of Africa as well as provide a hospitable home for American Negroes. He wished, first of all, to promote select American Negro emigration to Sierra Leone; his plan envisaged, too, the suppression of the slave trade and its replacement by legitimate commerce; his trader's mind was excited by the possibility of a vast commerce between Negro America and West Africa through which means the wealth and prestige of the race would rise. In 1808 Cuffee sought and obtained endorsement of his plans from the African Institution, - a humanitarian organization comprised mainly of former directors of the Sierra Leone Company, and still influential in directing the affairs of the colony. In 1811 he made his first exploratory trip to Sierra Leone. While there he exhibited thoroughness in examining the colony and careful thought in making plans for emigration. Before he left, he founded the Friendly Society of Sierra

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[15] For Cuffee's biography, see Henry Noble Sherwood, "Paul Cuffee", Journal of Negro History, VIII (April, 1923), 153-229.

Leone "to open a channell of intercourse between .../Negro/... America and Sierra Leone"; and as an earnest of his good faith bought himself a house in Freetown.[16] Long interested in American Negro education, Cuffee showed interest, too, in promoting education in Sierra Leone because "Africa calls for men of character to fill stations in the Legislature".[17] On his return to America, Cuffee sought personally to persuade Negroes in such centres as Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston and his own town of Westport, to commit themselves to supporting colonization in Africa and communicate with the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone. But it was not until 1815, after the end of the war of 1812, that Cuffee could make his second trip to Sierra Leone, this time taking largely at his own expense, thirty-eight Negroes comprised of families. In letters sent back to America, these emigrants urged other American Negroes to follow their example.[18] When Cuffee returned to the United States he gladly made his experience available to the founders of the American Colonization Society.[19] Indeed, he himself was earmarked as leader

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[16]Henry Noble Sherwood, "Paul Cuffee", Journal of Negro History, 176.

[17]Ibid., 206.

[18]Ibid., 318.

[19]Ibid., 213-221; also Henry N. Sherwood, "Paul Cuffee and his Contribution to the American Colonization Society", Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, VI (1913), 370-402.

of the emigrants to be sent out by the Society. Unfortunately, the illustrious Negro died before the first expedition of the Society left for West Africa, and just before he died reflected the thinking of American Negroes when he cautioned them to be wary of the scheme of the Society. Had Cuffee, who had won the confidence of Northern American Negroes and the respect of whites, lived and supervised the operations of the Society, he might well have been able to persuade other American Negro leaders to give it their support.

But despite Cuffee's warning the scheme of the Society did win the support of his friend - Daniel Coker, an outstanding leader. A runaway slave who as a boy had acquired a rudimentary education, Coker had become schoolmaster and religious leader to the free Negro community of Baltimore. As a young man, he had angrily denounced the institution of slavery and asserted that despite its handicap, "the African Race...had given proof of talents".[20] Resentful of discrimination against free Negroes, it was Coker, above all, who had instigated and justified the break away from Methodist Episcopal Church which resulted in the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.[21] Elected its first bishop, he declined the honour.

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[20] A Dialogue Between a Virginian and an African Minister, Written by Daniel Coker, a Descendant of Africa, Minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore (Baltimore, 1810), 10.

[21] Daniel A. Payne, History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, (Nashville, 1891), 89.

Intent on emigrating to West Africa, he was among the first eighty-eight emigrants sent out by the Society and although not officially a leader of the expedition, he was de facto leader of the Negro emigrants; it was he, and not the three white officials, who was able to command their respect and obedience.[22] Coker's Journal showed him as keenly conscious of the consequences for good which might ensue from the enterprise which had been initiated; he himself felt heavily the weight of the responsibility for its success. The colonists had been led to believe that they could settle in Sierra Leone, but when they arrived in March 1820, Governor Charles McCarthy, suspecting the Americans of ulterior political motives, refused them permission to do so. In the two years of hardship and uncertainty which followed before the emigrants finally settled at Cape Mesurado - the first beginnings of Liberia - the leadership of the colonists devolved mainly on him. With the establishment of this first colony, Liberia superseded Sierra Leone as a focus in West Africa for American Negro emigrants.

As remarkable as Paul Cuffee and Daniel Coker in his solicitude for the Negro race was the African-born John Kizzell, who had returned

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[22] The Journal of Daniel Coker, a Descendant of Africa, ...in the Ship Elizabeth, on a Voyage for Sherbro in Africa,... (Baltimore, 1820) 15-16.

to Sierra Leone as one of the Nova Scotian settlers.[23] Because of his intelligence, industry and somewhat more than rudimentary education, Kizzell became one of the most influential men in the colony in both civil and religious affairs. He, too, was a strong advocate of New World Negro repatriation. He expressed his view thus: "Africa is the land of black men and to Africa they must and will come.... As to the land it belongs to Africans abroad as well as those in the country. They have not forfeited their inheritance by being carried by force from their country".[24] When Cuffee first arrived in Sierra Leone, Kizzell was foremost in welcoming him, and in arranging the meetings which led to the founding of the Sierra Leone Friendly Society of which he himself became the first President. He was an invaluable guide and adviser to the first agents of the American Colonization Society who went out to Sierra Leone in 1818 on a tour of investigation, and later to the first emigrants sent out by the Society.

The spirit of pan-Negro nationalism exhibited among all the earliest Negro leaders of Liberia. A sense of mission informed their activities: they had gone to Africa, partly, it is true, to escape from harsh discrimination, but also with the positive purpose of lay-

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[23]Archibald Alexander, A History of Colonization on the Western Coast of Africa (Philadelphia, 1846), 129-139; Coker, Journal, 32; Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 113, 132.

[24]Quoted in Alexander, Colonization on Western Coast of Africa, 109.

ing the foundation of a new civilization which would reflect credit on the entire race. Men like Elijah Johnston, Lott Cary and Colin Teage were immensely race-proud, and provided examples of selfless and dedicated leadership unrivalled in the history of Liberia. In those early difficult days which the emigrants experienced, Johnson emerged as a leader whose great courage was a source of inspiration to them. When the white officials floundered in indecision as to the site of the colony, it was Johnson who stood firm and selected Cape Mesurado.[25] And it was he, above all, who was the guardian spirit of this first settlement. As a very old man, Johnson saw Liberia become an independent nation politically; he himself was one of the twelve participants in the deliberations which preceded its declaration of independence. He died shortly afterward, but his prestige and influence had been maintained to the end of his life.

Lott Cary, who was among the second group of emigrants, played the most versatile role in the early history of the colony as clergyman, doctor, militiaman, builder and pioneer in agriculture.[26] But if he was an inspired leader among the colonists, he regarded himself as primarily a missionary to the native Africans, and from the start he was concerned that colonists should foster friendly intercourse with

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[25]Harry H. Johnston, Liberia (London, 1906), Vol. 1, p.130.

[26]Ibid., 135; R. R. Gurley, Life of Jehudi Ashmun (Washington, 1835), 147-160; Alexander, op.cit., 241-254.

neighbouring tribes and so extend a civilizing influence over them. Cary was a truly remarkable man. Born a slave and debauched and ignorant at twenty-seven, by the age of thirty-three, a reformed Cary had acquired an appreciable amount of book learning and had become a quite well-to-do Baptist preacher in Richmond, Virginia. Yet he gave up his relatively comfortable position to do pioneering work in Liberia. He explained his decision thus:

> "I am an African; and in this country, however meritorious my conduct and respectable my character, I cannot receive the credit due to either. I wish to go to a country where I shall be estimated by my merits not by my complexion, and I feel bound to labour for my suffering race".[27]

Cary's death, by accident, in December 1828 was a great loss to the young colony. From the same Baptist congregation in Richmond and closely associated with Cary in Liberia was Colin Teage.

It was not until 1829 that another prominent Negro espoused the pan-Negro cause. He was Jamaican-born, John B. Russwurm, one of the first two graduates from an American College (Bowdoin, 1826) and founder of the first American Negro newspaper, Freedom Journal (March, 1827), which was at first abolitionist and opposed to the American Colonization Society.[28] To the chagrin of his associates, Russwurm, in 1829, announced his conversion to the point of view that the free Negro could

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[27]Quoted in Alexander, op.cit., 243.

[28]See William M. Brewer, "John B. Russwurm", Journal of Negro History, XIII (Oct. 1928), 413-422.

help himself and his race best by giving strong support to Liberia.[29] He promptly left for Liberia where he founded the first unofficial newspaper in West Africa, the Liberia Herald (1830). Subsequently, he held the positions of superintendent of education and colonial secretary, and from 1836 until his death in 1851, was Governor of Maryland, a colony adjacent to Liberia to the south, which was founded by the Maryland Colonization Society in 1834.[30] As the first coloured Governor in West Africa, Russwurm was always conscious that the conduct of his office was a test of the ability of the Negro: his governorship was characterized by dignity, firmness and justice to colonists, natives and missionaries alike.[31] He accepted that in the early stages of these Negro colonies in West Africa white assistance and cooperation was useful, but he laid emphasis on Negro self-reliance, insisted that Africa was for the Africans, and envisaged the time when a regenerated Africa would play an important role in the affairs of the world.

Among West Indian Negroes, too, there had been evidence of a pan-Negro impulse. After the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies in 1834, there sprung up, particularly in Jamaica and Barbados, a spontaneous and widespread desire on the part of Negroes to quit the

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[29] See editorials in Freedom's Journal, 11 (Feb. 14, 1829 ff.).

[30] For a history of the founding of the colony, see Journal of the Maryland Historical Society, V (Feb. 1850), 129-152.

[31] Russwurm's letters and reports as Governor, not used in Brewer, op.cit. are in the Archives of the Maryland Historical Society.

scene of their degradation and share a Christian life with their "benighted brothers" in Africa.[32] No outstanding leader emerged to organize a mass movement for repatriation; nor, for want of adequate financial resources among the Negroes, and the probable opposition of the still powerful West Indian sugar planters, was such a movement likely to succeed. But the desire of West Indian Negroes to emigrate did have consequences for West Africa: it was their earnestness which prompted the start of missionary work in West Africa by both the Baptist (British) and United Presbyterian Societies,[33] in which West Indian personnel played an invaluable role; it was the impulse which caused both the Basel mission in the Gold Coast[34] and the Wesleyans to use West Indians in the African field for the first time; finally, it accounted for the formation of the West Indian Church Association whose missionaries worked in the Rio Pongo area in West Africa; the Association was an autonomous body which, unlike the other missionary societies, derived its support in terms of finance and man-power, mainly from West Indian Negroes themselves.[35] Many of these West Indian missionaries and their helpers

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[32]See A. E. Payne, Freedom in Jamaica (London, 1946), 73-74; C.P.Groves, The Planting of Christianity in Africa (London, 1954), Vol. 11, 54; A General Account of the West Indian Church Association for the furtherance of the Gospel in West Africa (London, 1855), 5-7.

[33]Groves, Planting of Christianity in Africa, 23-44.

[34]Ralph M. Wiltgen, Gold Coast Missionary History (Illinois, 1956), 110.

[35]A. Barrow, Fifty Years in Western Africa: Being a Record of the West Indian Church on the Banks of the Rio Pongo (London, 1900), passim.

- and certainly men like Joseph Jackson, Henry Wharton, and John Duport[36] who, respectively, spent forty, twenty-eight and eighteen years in the African field, were imbued with a sense of working for the regeneration of Africa and on behalf of the Negro race.[37]

But if pan-Negro nationalism manifested itself only in an incipient way in the first half of the century, it seemed on the eve of the Civil War on the verge of becoming a creative historic force, thanks to the intensification of the pressure on the Negro in which even the federal powers participated. The year 1850 saw the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill which caused consternation among free American Negroes. And yet this was only the first shock in a decade

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[36]For biographical details see, respectively, Robert Glennie, Joseph Jackson Fuller, (London, 1925); G.G.Findlay and W.W.Holdsworth, The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (London, 1922), 164; and Barrow, op.cit., passim.

[37]Many of these West Indian missionaries and their descendants settled in West Africa; and in at least one instance were in large numbers to found a distinct colony - that of Victoria in the Cameroons by West Indian Baptists in 1858, see E. B. Underhill, Alfred Saker (London, 1884), Appendix 1: "Regulations for the Colony of Victoria, Amboises Bay". It should be noted, too, that many West Indian artisans and professionals were attracted to West Africa, particularly Sierra Leone, but primarily because of better economic opportunities there than in the West Indies itself. See Abioseh Nicol, "West Indians in West Africa", Sierra Leone Studies, New Series, No. 13 (June 1960), 14-23. From the late 1830's, too, Brazilian Negroes trickled back to West Africa, mainly to Lagos, where as artisans and agriculturists they formed an important segment of the community.

of "sorrowful and unmixed gloom";[38] further blows fell in the form of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the Dred Scott Decision, the failure of the John Brown raid, and the apparent let-down by the Republican party when Abraham Lincoln, a compromise candidate, assumed the presidency. In these years one of the most ardent advocates of pan-Negro nationalism was Edward Wilmot Blyden. In the next chapter will be discussed the phenomenon of pan-Negro nationalism between 1850 and 1862, and especially Blyden's contribution to it.

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[38] The phrase is that of the American Negro leader, James McCune Smith. See his introduction (p.56) to A Memorial Discourse by Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, Delivered in the Hall of the House of Representatives, ... (Washington, 1865).

Chapter One

BLYDEN AND PAN-NEGRO NATIONALISM, 1850 - 1862.

Edward Wilmot Blyden was born free[1] of pure Negro parentage[2] in a predominantly Jewish[3] and English-speaking community[4] on the Danish West Indian island of St. Thomas on 3 August 1832, and was educated at the local primary school, but more importantly through the private tuition and encouragement of his American pastor, Rev. John P. Knox, of the Dutch Reformed Church, and his own literate mother.[5] Young Blyden was both intellectually precocious and diligent; from early he demonstrated a gift of oratory, an aptitude for the literary, and a facility for learning languages, first discovered during a two-year stay (1844-46) with his family in Venezuela. While serving his apprenticeship as a tailor in St. Thomas, he decided on

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[1]Slavery was not abolished in the Danish West Indies until 1848, but here, too, before the general emancipation, there existed a small group of free Negroes.

[2]This is important because Blyden was to develop a strong aversion to mulattoes (used here loosely and throughout this thesis to mean persons with varying admixtures of Negro blood with that of Caucausoid and/or Mongoloid blood). Blyden himself claimed to be of Ibo stock, see Sierra Leone Weekly News, XXVIII, 10 Feb. 1912.

[3]Edward W. Blyden, The Jewish Question (Liverpool, 1898), 6.

[4]Johnston, Liberia, 231.

[5]Edward W. Blyden, Liberia's Offspring (New York 1862), see introduction.

the ministry as a career and was taken to the United States in May, 1850, by Rev. Knox who attempted to get him into Rutger's Theological College, his (Knox's) alma mater. But the young Negro was refused admission because of his race.

While in the United States, Blyden had the traumatic experience of observing the Fugitive Slave Bill come into operation.[6] This new measure represented a major triumph for the slave states: it gave Federal commissioners unlimited powers for the apprehension and return of runaway slaves. But the bonus rewards for returning alleged fugitives, when coupled with the fact that they could not summon witnesses or testify on their own behalf, meant, in effect, that even free Negroes were at the mercy of unscrupulous slaveholders and commissioners.[7] Needless to say, the Bill caused consternation among free American Negroes.

Undoubtedly, it was his unpleasant experiences in the United States, combined with the knowledge of the disabilities which the Negro suffered in the rest of the New World, which caused Blyden to accept the offer of the New York Colonization Society, a subsidiary of the American Colonization Society,[8] to emigrate to Liberia. Sim-

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[6]Thirty-four years later Blyden recalled "his great fear of being seized for a slave": Blyden to Coppinger, 13 Sept. 1884, Vol. 21, Pt. 2.

[7]Some free Negroes were, in fact, seized as runaway slaves. See Benjamin Brawley, A Short History of the American Negro (New York, 1950), 84.

[8]The American Colonization Society had subsidiaries in most of the states, and some of these, like the Maryland Colonization Society, acted independently for some time.

ultaneous with this acceptance came Blyden's conversion to the pan-Negro idea. Unlike American Negro leaders, Blyden was not concerned to question the motives of the Colonization Society because he was convinced that its operation would bring only good to Africa and the Negro race. Even before he left the United States he expressed his conviction that emigration to Liberia was the best solution to the problems which American Negroes faced, and that the accession of westernized Negroes was the stimulus which Africa needed for the creation of a new civilization, which would combine the best elements of western and African culture. He was optimistic of the future of the Negro Republic: already he could see "Liberia include within its limits the dark regions of Ashantee and Dahomey and bring those barbarous tribes under civilized and enlightened influences".[9] He sailed from Baltimore on 21 December 1850, on the packet "Liberia" and was thankful to arrive safely in the Negro republic on 25 January 1851 after a stormy crossing during which he at times despaired of ever reaching his destination.[10]

And what of Liberia of which the young Negro held such high hopes? By 1851, the Negro Republic was a country of some thirteen thousand square miles, with an average width of forty-five miles and a coastline of approximately three hundred miles. Its population of six and

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[9] New York Colonization Journal, 1 (Dec. 1850).

[10] Blyden to Walter Lowrie, Feb. 1851, P.B.F.M. Papers, Vol. 3.

a half thousand Americo-Liberians lived in scattered settlements; in addition, there were some fifty thousand natives and liberated Africans under its jurisdiction. Up to 1850, the American Colonization Society had sent out somewhat more than six thousand emigrants, but the high mortality rate among them prevented any population increase. Moreover, since 1827 the majority of Negroes sent out by the Society were slaves who had been emancipated expressly for that purpose,[11] and were clearly unfit to withstand the rigours of a pioneering community: many of them were unhealthy specimens: slave-holders were not over-scrupulous about releasing those slaves for emigration to Liberia who were no longer economically productive. Indeed, Blyden himself, although he remained an ardent advocate of colonization, protested vehemently against the invidious practice whereby, slave-holders desiring "to be lauded for humanity and benevolence", foisted upon Liberia "a set of worn-out miserable wrecks of humanity who immediately upon their arrival are thrown upon the charity of the community".[12] It is not surprising that the sense of mission and destiny which inspired the earliest emigrants was missing

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[11] Up to 1850, 6,116 emigrants were sent out by the Society with the breakdown as follows: 2,315 were born free, 165 purchased their freedom, and 3636 were emancipated for emigration; in addition, 1,044 African captives were liberated in Liberia by the American slave squadron. Up to 1850, 800 emigrants were colonized in Maryland. See American Colonization Society, Annual Report (Washington, 1851), 83-84.

[12] Edward W. Blyden, A Voice from Bleeding Africa (Monrovia, 1856), 26.

among the later ones. Apart from the very early leaders, up to 1850, Liberia seemed to have produced only one outstanding champion of the pan-Negro ideology, the "poet and philosopher", Hilary Teage, son of Colin Teage. As a very young man among the first settlers, he had caught and maintained the pan-Negro spirit throughout his life. He succeeded Russwurm as editor of the Liberia Herald in 1835, and for the next fourteen years expressed his pan-Negro sentiments through this organ.[13] Although without much formal education, he was probably Liberia's first intellectual. He was certainly the first poet of pan-Negro nationalism: his poetry is imbued with a sense of the past achievements of the race and of an important future mission to fulfil.[14] Probably the finest orator in the early history of

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[13]There are large gaps in the files of this newspaper. However there are, in the Archives of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, two bound volumes (incomplete) of the newspapers: the first is the relevant one and covers the period 24 Feb. 1842 - 20 July 1853.

[14]For example, in one poem he asserts that Negroes played a prominent role in early Egyptian history and wished the race to draw inspiration from this: "From pyramida hall/ From Karnac's sculptured wall,/ From Thebes they loudly call -/ Retake your fame" quoted in Edward W. Blyden, From West Africa to Palestine (Freetown, Manchester and London, 1873), 104; another shows his concern for Liberia's success: "All hail, Liberia! hail!/ Arise and now prevail/ O'er thy foes/ In truth and righteousness/ In all the Arts of Peace/ Advance and still increase/ Though hosts oppose!/" Verse two: "At the loud call we rise,/ And press toward the prize/ In glory's race,/ All redolent of fame./ The land to which we came/ We breathe the inspiring flame/ and onward press." Verse three: "Here liberty shall dwell/ Here Justice shall prevail/ Religion here;/ To this, fair Virtue's dome meek innocence may come/ And find a peaceful home/ And know no fear.", quoted in Frederick Alexander Durham, The Lone-Star of Liberia (London, 1892), 1.

Liberia, his oratory always breathed pan-Negro patriotism, as witness the following excerpt made from a speech to his fellow-citizens in 1846:

> "Upon you, rely upon it, depends, in a measure you can hardly conceive, the future destiny of the race. You are to give the answer whether the African race is doomed to interminable degradation - a hideous blot on the fair face of creation, a libel upon the dignity of human nature; or whether they are capable to take an honourable rank amongst the great family of nations."[15]

He was one of the few Liberians who resented the country's almost total dependence on foreign support, and who clamoured for political independence hoping it will induce an independence of spirit. Like Elijah Johnson, he was a representative at Liberia's Constitutional Convention.

But, on the whole, Liberians demonstrated very little unity of purpose or public spirit: often were they berated by the white Governors and a few of their progressive leaders for their "want of self-respect" and their easy dependence on foreign philanthropy.[16] Politically, until its independence, the supreme authority of the colony lay with the American Colonization Society who ruled through its white agents and governors, although from 1825 Liberians participated formally in the direction of the colony. And yet the colony's

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[15] Quoted in Wilson Armistead, A Tribute to the Negro (Manchester and London), 532; also J. A. B. Horton, West African Countries and Peoples (London, 1868), 273.

[16] Johnston, Liberia, 149, 182-184.

independence had come not so much from the compelling desire for it on the part of Liberians, as from the attempt of the American Colonization Society to prevent Liberia falling into British or French hands, and of giving it the sovereign power necessary to deal with recalcitrant European traders scornful of the idea of a Negro nation.[17] And so on July 26, 1847, Liberia became a sovereign nation with a constitution modelled on that of the United States,[18] but containing a provision that was almost guaranteed to keep the young nation in a continuously chaotic political state: the President, the House of Representatives and half of the Senators were to be elected every two years. Moreover, the stipulation in the Liberian Constitution that the franchise was to be exercised "by every male citizen of twenty-one possessing real estate", in effect, confined it to the American colonists: no attempt was made to define the future relationship between the colonists and the aboriginal elements, or ascribe to the latter a role in Liberian life; nor was there a declaration of the positive role Liberia might play in rehabilitating the fortunes of the Negro race - a declaration that would have pleased

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[17] Johnston, Liberia, 187-195.

[18] The basic document was drafted by Simon Greenleaf, Professor of law at Harvard University, but somewhat revised by Liberia's Constitutional Convention; the preamble was written by Liberians themselves.

a patriot like Blyden.[19] Quite rigid social stratifications among the colonists, and their common contempt for native Africans had militated against co-operative efforts. Economically, a modified form of plantation capitalism of the Southern United States was adopted, the unproductive Liberian "aristocracy" exploiting native labour in a system that bore a remarkable resemblance to slavery.[20] The colonist himself neglected agriculture in preference for trading which often brought quick profits but did nothing to improve the economy of the colony.

But if the young Negro nation had had an unpromising start, it could count as positive achievements the elimination of the slave trade on its part of the coast, and the laying of the basis (albeit inadequate and faulty) of a progressive civilization. It might yet have grown to confound its detractors. For the very fact of its independence had caused it to elicit more serious attention from New World Negroes. Congratulations to the new Republic came from all parts of the Negro world, and many hoped with John B. Hepburn of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, that Liberia's course was now "onward to empire and to fame".[21] And

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[19] Many years later, in a racial interpretation of the Constitution, Blyden asserted that the "defects" in the Constitution and its preamble were due to the fact that most of the members of Liberia's Constitutional Convention were not "pure Negroes", but men with a large admixture of Caucasian blood. Blyden claimed that "they felt no definite relation to the people of the country in which they lived and no abounding joy in a return home": Blyden to Coppinger, 11 Apr. 1888, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 25, Pt. 1.

[20] George W. Brown, The Economic History of Liberia (Washington, 1941), 64.

[21] Maryland Colonization Journal, IV (1848), 213.

New World Negroes showed a greater dispositinn to emigrate to Liberia as an independent Negro Republic. American Negroes sent out several delegations to spy out the new nation and report on its possibilities as a future home.[22] West Indian Negroes, too, showed interest: for instance, the Barbados Colonization Society "for assisting in the suppression of the Slave Trade, and the introduction of civilization into Africa", received the news of Liberia's independence with "inexpressible joy" and regarded it "as another demonstration to the world, that the descendants of Africa, when placed in a fair position, are not inferior in civilization, religion and morality, to those nations, amongst whom it was their lot to be cast for a given time";[23] they wanted to play their role in the Negro Republic and sought its assistance to emigrate there. The new interest in Liberia reflected itself in a substantial increase in the annual number of emigrants: the number had risen dramatically from fifty-one in 1847 to four hundred and forty-one in 1848 - the year after Liberia's independence; in the next decade the rate of emigration trebled what it had been hitherto.[24] If then, Blyden, like others who envisaged the christianising and civilising of Africa through the agency of western

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[22] See the Annual Reports of the American Colonization Society (Washington, 1849-1851).

[23] African Repository, XXIV (Aug. 1848), 64.

[24] The American Colonization Society, Fifty-second Annual Report, (Washington, 1869), 53.

Negroes, grossly under-rated the difficulties of this process, there was still some justification for his optimism that Liberia might grow into an influential Negro nation.

When Blyden first arrived in Liberia, he apparently had no firm future plan. He noted, regretfully, that there was no opportunity to practise his skill as a tailor as all clothing was imported ready-made[25]. After some stay in Monrovia, Blyden went to Grand Bassa as the guest and probably clerical assistant of Stephen A. Benson, a prosperous trader, who was to succeed Roberts in 1856 as President of the Republic. At Benson's home he was gratified to find evidence of Liberian loyalty to the Negro race: there was a portrait of the militant Negro leader, Henry Highland Garnet[26] and underneath his motto: "Better die free men than live to be slaves".[27] By mid-August Blyden was back in Monrovia where, although suffering from "acclimating sickness", he earned his board as a part-time clerk for a merchant,[28] and resumed his studies at Alexander High School, a Presbyterian institution under Rev. D. A. Wilson, a graduate of Princeton University. So impressed was Wilson with his exemplary character and exceptional ability, that he wished Blyden to devote "all his energies"[29] to study,

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[25] Blyden to Lowrie, Feb. 1851, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 3.

[26] See below, p. 48.

[27] Monrovia Observer, V (12. Jan. 1882). Blyden recalled this incident on 4 Jan. 1882 at a reception for Garnet, new U.S. Minister to Liberia.

[28] D. A. Wilson to J. L. Wilson, 1 Oct. 1851, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 3.

[29] Ibid.

a suggestion to which Blyden was easily amenable. Wilson was able to persuade Rev. Knox and his congregation in St. Thomas and also the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, New York, to contribute towards Blyden's upkeep while he devoted himself fully to his studies.[30] Wilson became Blyden's mentor and friend and encouraged his literary aspirations. At Alexander High School, Blyden made "flattering progress" in his study of theology, the classics, geography and mathematics.[31] His formal studies he supplemented with systematic private study and wide general reading. He read critically anything pertaining to the Negro and assiduously studied Hebrew so that he could read the Scriptures in the original and particularly those passages which purported to refer to the Negro race.[32]

From the start, too, he participated actively in public life and won the admiration of the leading men. A year after arriving in the Negro Republic, it was reported of him that "It is such men that, above all others, are pressingly needed here.... Here is one willing to devote himself to the cause of Negro elevation".[33] Soon after settling he became a correspondent of the Liberia Herald (then the only organ

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[30] D. A. Wilson to J. P. Knox, 23 Jan. 1852, in Edith Holden, The Story of Blyden (1940); also Blyden to Knox, April 1852, Ibid.

[31] Wilson to Knox, 23 Jan. 1852, Ibid.

[32] See footnote 1 in Edward W. Blyden, "The Negro in Ancient History", The Peoples of Africa (New York, 1871), 1.

[33] D. A. Wilson to J. P. Knox, 23 Jan. 1852, cited in Holden, The Story of Blyden.

of expression in Liberia) and for a year in 1855/56 became its editor. No public issue lacked his comment. He played his part, too, in the defense of the colony. In January 1852, the Liberians sent an expedition against the Kroomen; he was unable to accompany it, but kept guard at night. The Kroomen were overwhelmed, and it is interesting to note that Blyden's reaction to this was a typically Liberian one: after reporting to a friend that the "enemy" was subdued, he further commented: "Surely, God is on our side".[34] His attitude was soon to change, and he came to berate Liberians for making a distinction between themselves and the native Africans, and for excluding the latter from full participation in the life of the Republic. In the following year, already a change was evident in his attitude to native Africans. He had accompanied a Liberian expedition against King Boomboo, a native African chief. This was probably his first excursion deep into native African territory, and he came away impressed. He found King Boomboo's town "remarkably fortified", saw this as a sign of the "inventive genius of the natives" and proof of "the unfairness of those who represent the native Africans as naturally indolent, and living in a state of ease and supineness".[35]

In Liberia young Blyden had continued his pan-Negro propaganda:

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[34] Blyden to J. P. Knox, Feb. 1852, cited in Ibid.

[35] New York Colonization Journal, 1 (July 1853).

his writings[36] appeared in the African Repository, (the journal of the American Colonization Society), the Journals of the New York and Maryland Colonization Societies, and the Liberia Herald, and are characterized by strong support for Negro colonization; defence of Liberia from unsympathetic attacks and vindication of the character and ability of the Negro. His first letter to the United States described his rapture and pride at being on African soil and demonstrated his striving to recall what was worthy in the African past: "You can easily imagine the delight with which I gazed upon the land of Tertullian, ancient fathers in the Christian Church; of Hannibal and Henry Diaz, renowned generals; yes, and the land of my forefathers".[37] He assured that "the land here is teeming with everything necessary for the subsistence of man"; even the sceptics he advised to come and see for themselves. His first big opportunity to act as a defender and champion of Liberia came in 1852 when Gerrit Smith,

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[36]It is, of course, impossible to say how widely read, among literate Negroes, Blyden's writings were. It is perhaps reasonable to assume that American Negro leaders read the Colonization Journals, if only for the purpose of countering their propaganda. Negroes interested in Liberia read them, too. It is certain, though, that by 1858 Blyden's reputation as a writer was already established among American Negroes: when in that year the Anglo-African Magazine started publication, Blyden's name was regularly advertised in the Weekly Anglo-African as one of a dozen outstanding Negro writers who would contribute regularly to the Magazine.

[37]Blyden to Walter Lowrie, Feb. 1851, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 3; also quoted in African Repository, XXVII (Sept. 1851), 266. Blyden infers that Tertullian, Hannibal and Diaz were Negroes, which, of course, they were not.

a veteran abolitionist and member of Congress from New York, in opposing a proposed scheme to colonize New York Negroes in Liberia, dubbed the American Colonization Society "the deadliest enemy of the Negro race" and Liberia " a frightful graveyard".[38] The young Negro conceded that Senator Smith was well-meaning but was nonetheless "doing ... considerable harm ... by blinding the minds of coloured men to their true interests".[39] Colonization in Africa, he contended, was "the only means of delivering the colored man from oppression and of raising him up to respectability". He was contemptuous of the advice of Smith and other abolitionists that, if necessary, free Negroes should retire to Canada to await the outcome of the issue of slavery. Admitting that the mortality rate in Liberia was high, Blyden noted that this was a temporary condition that was common to all pioneer communities: it was an unimportant consideration in view of the high purpose for which Liberia existed. This passionate rebuke of a famous philanthropic figure made Blyden at twenty, one of the foremost champions of Liberia.

While Blyden was passionately rebuking Senator Smith, Martin R. Delany, a Harvard-trained doctor, and a former newspaper editor and

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[38]Howard H. Bell, "The Negro Emigration Movement, 1849-54; A Phase of Negro Nationalism", Phylon, XX (Nov. 1859), 136.

[39]Liberia Herald, New Series, 111 (July 7, 1852); also Maryland Colonization Society, VI (Nov. 1852), 277-280.

abolitionist, was devising a pan-Negro scheme based on a Negro empire in the Carribean and South and Central America.[40] As fierce in his pride of race as Blyden, Delany had, after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill, despaired of American Negroes ever enjoying the full rights of citizenship in the United States. He had grown impatient even of the white abolitionists when he realized that Negroes were "occupying the very same position, in relation to our Anti-Slavery friends, as we do in relation to the pro-slavery part of the community - a mere secondary, underling position, in all our relations to them, and anything more than this comes by mere sufferance". And having dismissed with "contemptuous indignation the absurd idea of the natural inferiority of the African", he warned Negroes not to carry their religion to the point of hoping for a divine intervention on their behalf: constructive action was necessary. His projected empire was to be formed by American Negroes emigrating to South America, an area for which, however, he made two wrong claims: that it was predominantly Negroid and that there had "never existed an inequality on account of color or race".[41] His ad-

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[40] See Martin R. Delany, The Condition, Elevation and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered (Philadelphia, 1852).

[41] Ibid., 27. It is true to say, however, that Negroes in Latin-America were accorded much better treatment than in Anglo-Saxon America: in the former, unlike the latter, Negro slaves were protected both by law and custom, and manumission was widespread. Also in Latin America it was much easier for free Negroes to integrate within the general society than it was in the United States. For a comparitive study of Negroes in Latin and Anglo-Saxon America, see Frank Tannenbaum, Slave and Citizen (New York, 1947); also Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery (Chicago, 1959).

vocacy of a Negro empire in the Americas was partly for strategic reasons: by its proximity it would, either by moral or physical force, bring about the collapse of slavery in the United States; partly, too, because Negroes, as the economic base in the development of the New World, were entitled to their full share of it. But he did not overlook Africa: he expressed a keen interest in seeing that continent "civilized and enlightened", and in seeing Liberia take a "high and elevated position ... among the nations of the earth". However, he remained unrelenting in his opposition to the American Colonization Society and in his criticisms of Liberia's dependence on it.[42]

Thus, the pan-Negro schemes of Blyden and Delany advocated different strategies in attempting to reach the same goal. And interestingly enough, it brought the two men into conflict. Delany's attack on the American Colonization Society and Liberia was Blyden's cue for another spirited defence of both.[43] He praised Cuffee as the originator of American Negro emigration to Africa but heartily disapproved of Delany's plan: he considered it a diversionary measure that was doomed to failure; it was only in Africa that the Negro race could rise to distinguished achievements.

Before Delany could act on his proposed scheme, the largest- ever

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[42]Delany, ...Elevation...of Colored People, 169, 198.

[43]Liberia Herald, New Series, 111 (October 6, 1852).

Negro National Conference was convened in Rochester, New York, in 1853. Here some leaders favoured emigration as a policy of action, but the anti-emigrationists led by the foremost American Negro leader, the abolitionist and newspaper-editor, Frederick Douglass, manoeuvred the Conference into going on record as opposing emigration.[44] But as soon as the conference was over, the emigrationists, led by Delany, James M. Whitfield, a popular poet, and James T. Holly, an accomplished Episcopalian clergyman, called a conference for August, 1854, from which anti-emigrationists were to be excluded: it was to be a gathering of like-minded delegates who were to decide on appropriate action. Douglass described this action as "narrow and illiberal" and sparked the first public debate among American Negro leaders on the subject of emigration[45] - an event which reflected the changing mood of American Negroes.

The conference which met in Cleveland, Ohio, was the most widely represented ever convened by Negroes.[46] Shortly before it met, the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), which stipulated that the question of slavery should be decided by the territorial legislatures, had provided another triumph for the supporters of slavery. Understandably, the mood of the conference was militant. Delany

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[44] Cromwell, "The Early Negro Convention Movement, 16.

[45] Frederick Douglass' Paper, VI (October 6, 1853 ff).

[46] Martin R. Delany, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, (New York, 1861), 6.

repeated his call[47] for the creation of a Negro empire in the New World where "the inherent traits, attributes ... and native characteristics peculiar to our race could be cultivated and developed". He warned that "our submission does not gain for us an increase of friends nor respectability, as the white race will only respect those who oppose their usurpation, and acknowledge as equals those who will not submit to their rule". They were to make concerted action: "We must make an issue, create an event and establish for ourselves a position. This is essentially necessary for our effective elevation as a people, in shaping our national development, directing our destiny and redeeming ourselves as a race."[48] A Negro empire was further necessary to put "a check to European presumption and insufferable Yankee intrusion and impudence".

Although the Conference adopted Delany's report, some leading delegates showed specific territorial preferences: Whitfield favoured colonization in Central America, while Haiti opted for Haiti. Each was commissioned to negotiate for the emigration of Negroes to the area of his choice. No public announcement emerged from the Conference about Africa, but it, too, had been discussed. Delany himself tells the story:

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[47] Martin R. Delany, "Political Destiny of the Colored Race of the American Continent", Appendix No. 3, in Report of the Select Committee on Emancipation and Colonization (Washington, 1862), 37-59.

[48] Ibid., 43.

> "The Convention...in its Secret Session made Africa, with its inexhaustible productions and the great facilities for checking the abominable Slave Trade, its most important point of dependence...Though our first gun was levelled, and the first shell thrown at the American continent driving the slave-holding faction into despair ... Africa was held in reserve..."[49]

As a result of the Conference, a National Emigration Board was set up. Delany began negotiation for emigration with "several states of Central and South America as well as Jamaica and Cuba".[50] Holly left for Haiti to conduct negotiations there, which although inconclusive, were encouraging enough to cause him on his return to begin agitating for Negro emigration to that territory.[51]

In August, 1856, the biennial meeting of the National Emigration Conference convened again in Cleveland, delegates reaffirmed their commitment to emigration and decided to organize a publishing company for propaganda purposes.

Blyden welcomed the purposeful spirit of the emigrationists but he felt that their energies were being misdirected. It is perhaps no coincidence that his first pamphlet - in part another plea to American Negroes to support colonization in Liberia - was published just before the Emigration Conference was due to meet. In it

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[49] Delany, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, 8-9.

[50] Ibid., 10.

[51] James T. Holly, A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government, and Civilized Progress, as Demonstrated by Historical Events of the Haitian Revolution; and the Subsequent Acts of the People since their National Independence (New Haven, 1857).

he appealed to "colored men of every rank and station, in every clime and country" to support Negro colonization in Africa. He reminded that the object of Liberia was "the redemption of Africa and the disenthralment and elevation of the Africa race, objects worthy of every colored man..."[52]

Blyden had set himself two tasks: to prepare his own self for leadership and to help to prepare Liberia to play the leading role in the upliftment of the race. In a country where all ambitious young men became traders, he disdained "commerce, manufactures , or any of the money-making pursuits"[53]. He was intent on becoming a clergyman and school-teacher. Since 1853 he was a lay-preacher, and from 1854 did part-time teaching at his school. In 1858 he became an ordained minister and at the same time succeeded Wilson as Principal of Alexander High School, where he worked with rare devotion under unfavourable conditions.

In his concern that Liberia should become a nation of which all Negroes could be proud, Blyden at twenty, found himself giving hortatory admonitions far beyond his years:

> "...we call most solemnly upon the young men and young women of Liberia to apply themselves to study to embrace the opportunity they enjoy for mental discipline and moral culture, so as to ensure the success of Liberia and the perpetuity of her institutions and be able to

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[52]Blyden, A Voice from Bleeding Africa, 27.

[53]Blyden to John L. Wilson, 20 March 1859, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 3.

> stand up in defense of their country's rights against the many and formidable enemies who oppose her onward and glorious march."[54]

The death of any of the old leaders was usually for Blyden an occasion to admonish his fellow youths to prepare themselves for leadership. Thus the death in 1854 of both Hilary Teage and Samuel Benedict, two able Liberian leaders, elicited from Blyden a sober warning:

> "How painful is the reflection that there are but few of the young men of Liberia who seem to give the future of their country a moment's thought...! O young men and women of Liberia, arise fromyour lethargy, shake off your puerile notions and practices! It is high time to bestir yourselves to be men and women. Let the brave achievements and noble deeds of your fathers arouse you to effort. Let the future glory that awaits your country kindle within you an honourable ambition and urge you onward."[55]

He wanted to see "the young men of Liberia, like the youth among the ancient Spartan, exercise themselves vigorously in all things which pertain to the country's welfare".[56] Always anxious to promote the unity of the country, Blyden was keenly disappointed when the retirement of President J. J. Roberts in 1854 brought, for the first time, a fiercely contested presidential election between Stephen Allen Benson and Edward James Royce, which divided the country into openly partisan groups. Blyden had to remind his countrymen that the "colored man was on trial" in Liberia: "There is no country in the world, of

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[54] Liberia Herald, New Series, III (6 Oct. 1852).

[55] The New York Colonization Journal, IV (Aug. 1854).

[56] African Repository, XXXI (Apr. 1855), 18.

the same territorial extent of political importance, that is the object of such constant observation, such varied speculations, as the Republic of Liberia!"[57] The fact that presidential elections were held biennially gave no comfort to Blyden who regarded "partyism" as a superfluous luxury for Liberia.

At the ceremony marking the retirement of Roberts as President and the inauguration of Benson, Blyden sounded a familiar note: the young men of Liberia were not preparing themselves for the arduous responsibilities that must devolve upon them: "There is a great work to be done by us, which requires strength and energy for its performance, there are high and lofty duties to be executed".[58] Blyden himself was closely associated with the new President to whom he dedicated his first pamphlet "as a humble tribute to lofty patriotism, distinguished talents and sincere piety".[59]

No one articulated better than Blyden the role that Liberia could play in the psychological uplift of the Negro. His address in 1857 at the annual celebration of the National Independence of Liberia is at once the most cogent statement of "her duties and responsibilities" and the most trenchant criticism of "Liberia as she is". With regards

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[57] African Repository, XXXI (June 1855), 186.

[58] Edward W. Blyden (ed.) A Brief Account of the Proceedings of the Retirement of President J. J. Roberts and the Inauguration of Hon. S. A. Benson... (Monrovia, 1856), 35.

[59] Blyden, A Voice from Bleeding Africa, see preface.

to the former, Blyden explained:

> "Liberia occupies a two-fold relation of the deepest interest; first, to the aboriginal inhabitants; and, secondly to the descendants of Africa in American thraldom. Each of these relations involve corresponding responsibilities and duties. By the first, we are placed under the obligation to do all we can by effort and by example to rescue the heathen around us from moral debasement.
>
> By the second relation, it is incumbent upon us to exert ourselves to the utmost to hasten the disenthralment and elevation of our exiled brethren.... Here we have an opportunity that we have no where else, of compelling the world to an audience. Standing upon the soil of freedom in the land of our forefathers, and employing the powerful lever furnished by the combination of Religion, Literature, Science and Arts, we have a fulcrum and a lever wherewith we can move the whole world in behalf of our race."[60]

It was because the possibilities of Liberia had so excited his imagination that Blyden so frankly exposed its deficiencies and weaknesses: he deprecated the moral decadence of Liberians, their preoccupation with the material to the exclusion of the literary or the cultural; their prediliction for the foreign and exotic rather than the native, and their utter dependence on foreign philanthropy.[61] He reminded his countrymen that "a state of dependence is entirely incongruous with liberty" and tried to bring them to a sense of their responsibility: "Liberia is no place for base inactivity and repose. No: it is the scene of a struggle; a race down-trodden and oppressed,

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[60] Edward W. Blyden, Liberia as she is, and the Present Duty of her Citizens,...(Monrovia, 1857), 9-10.

[61] Ibid., 12-18.

struggles for a place among nations of the earth. In this struggle to be unfaithful is criminal, to slumber is dangerous, to cease to act is to die."

So strong was his wish for Liberia's success that he seized on any hopeful sign: influenced by the rising tide of emigration in the United States, he was optimistic that "We are doubtless the forerunners of a powerful exodus - we are the pioneers of a large empire". He was hopeful that Liberia would yet grasp its historic opportunity. In his contemplations he saw "visions of a mighty Christian influence being exerted over the length and breadth of this continent: we see Africa rising on the wings of a Christian civilization, the last perhaps of time's empire and the noblest".[62]

Blyden's castigation of Liberian life brought a storm of protest from Liberians of the ruling class. But Blyden, far from repentant, was glad "of the excited feelings of the community on the subject; for it is a sign of thought and there is hope for improvement". Nor was he without support. The Hon. D. B. Warner, Secretary of State, "endorsed every word"; he maintained that Blyden's stand should have been taken much earlier in Liberia, and recommended that his address be read "from one end of the Republic to the other".[63]

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[62]Edward W. Blyden, Liberia as she is, and the Present Duty of her Citizens,... 35.

[63]Ibid., see introduction.

Another explicit theme in Blyden's writings was his defence of Negro ability and character. From early he had been diligent in his attempts to study the history of Africa and the Negro and was chagrined to find that the available material was prejudiced.[64] He was determined to rectify this. Writing in 1856 he asserted that "the African has no superior among the races and is in advance of some". He went on to give a list of some twenty-seven distinguished Negroes, from J. E. J. Capitein, African-born author, linguist and theologian; through James Derham, the distinguished American physician; Alexander Pushkin, poet and historian of Russia; Toussaint L'Ouverture, celebrated general and liberator of Haiti; and finally two contemporaries of his, Frederick Douglass and Alexander Crummell, and then with indignant logic asked: "In view of such examples of intellectual and moral greatness...shall such ordinary white men as the majority of American slave-holders are, despise and insult the race from which they sprang and allege its inferiority, in justification of this horrible system?".[65]

In 1857 Blyden made his first attempt designed specifically to vindicate the Negro race.[66] He examined and rebutted with great cogency all the theories which purported to prove Negro inferiority; these theories he claimed were nothing but the unfounded propaganda of the

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[64] Edward W. Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race (London, 1888) see preface.

[65] Blyden, A Voice from Bleeding Africa, 21.

[66] Blyden, Vindication of the Negro Race (Monrovia, 1857).

Anglo-Saxon to justify his atrocities against the Negro. With impressive lucidity he showed the prejudice which the Negro faced:

> "Arguments in our favour which would be regarded as conclusive in regard to other races, are unceremoniously discarded. Isolated cases the most unfavorable are taken as fair specimens of the character of the whole race. The intellectual and moral character of the African in freedom is inferred from what it is in slavery, as though the two conditions were exactly similar; or as though the African were not, as other men, influenced by circumstances; so that if the black man, in the midst of cruel oppressions, of which for centuries he has been subject, gives evidence of the legitimate influences of such oppressions, and does not come forward and astound the world by inventions and discoveries, it follows, according to their reasoning, that, in a condition free and untrammelled, he will be both mentally and physically the same; he is, therefore, set down as belonging to an inferior order of beings, fitted only for servitude.... In judging of Anglo-Saxons, one set of principles is applied; in judging of Africans another."[67]

Blyden was fully aware of the demoralising effect of slavery on all men; he saw it was a problem that American Negro leaders had to face: "It is...incumbent on the intelligent among the African race, to discountenance as much as possible this servile feeling, and to use every means to crush it whenever it appears, for its influence on the mind and morals and general progress of the race is fearfully injurious." Nor did he wish unearned respect for the Negro race: "...so long as we contentedly remain at the foot of the ladder at whose top our oppressors stand, it is unreasonable, it is absurd to call upon them to recognize us as equals in every respect; and it is worse than absurdity to abuse

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[67]Blyden, Vindication of the Negro Race (Monrovia, 1857), 43.

and vilify them for their opinions and prejudices with respect to us."[68]

From Monrovia Blyden continued to watch with keen interest the growing feeling for emigration on the part of American Negroes. He was optimistic that there would yet be an "exodus" to Liberia, and events in the United States seemed to justify his hopes. American Negroes received yet another shock in 1857, by the Dred Scott Decision which, in effect, meant the endorsement of the principles of slavery by the highest court of the land.[69] Although Frederick Douglass still hopefully asked American Negroes to take "this decision unlooked for and monstrous...in a cheerful spirit," it is certain that they were not so disposed and that the emigrationists were psychologically in an ascendant position. The Dred Scott Decision led directly to the founding of The Weekly Anglo-African and the Anglo-African Magazine.[70] Both publications were founded by Robert Hamilton and were staunchly emigrationist. Hamilton urged Negroes to "set themselves zealously at work to create a position of their own - an empire which shall challenge the admiration of the world, rivalling the glory of their historic ancestors."

It was in 1857, too, that James T. Holly made his important con-

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[68]Blyden, Vindication of the Negro Race (Monrovia, 1857).

[69]John Hope Franklin, From Freedom to Slavery (New York, 1956), 264.

[70]Weekly Anglo-African, 1 (July 23, 1859).

tribution to the literature of the pan-Negro idea. More than any feat in the past of the Negro, it was the success of the Haitian revolution which provided, to Holly's mind, the amplest proof of Negro ability. In the contemplation of this revolution, Holly found the pride and emotional satisfaction that Negro leaders sought in the past of the race. With great racial pride, he exaggerated that "This revolution is one of the noblest, grandest and most justifiable outbursts against oppression that is recorded in the pages of history... is also the grandest political event in this or any other age...it surpasses the American revolution in an incomparable degree".[71] He was impressed that "Never before, in all the annals of the world's history did a nation of abject and chattel slaves arise in the terrific might of their rescuscitated manhood, and regenerate, redeem and disenthral themselves: by taking their station at one gigantic bound, as an independent nation among the sovereignties of the world".[72]

His object in recounting this phase of Haitian history was to arouse Negroes of the United States "to a full consciousness of their own inherent dignity and thereby increasing among them that self-respect which shall urge them to the performance of those great deeds which the age and the race now demand at their hands". They were to help in building up Haiti "until its glory and renown overspread and

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[71]Holly, A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race.., 7.

[72]Ibid., 8.

cover the whole earth, and redeem and regenerate by its influence in the future, the benighted Fatherland of the race of Africa". As a tactical measure, Holly was against immediate American Negro emigration to Africa: for a start, efforts should be concentrated on building a "Negro Nationality in the New World". Such a successful Negro state would then "shed its orient beams upon the Fatherland of the race".

By 1858, the geographical bases for a pan-Negro program had been narrowed to Haiti and West Africa. Shortly after the second National Emigration Conference, Delany had abandoned his scheme of a Negro empire in the Americas, and Whitfield had died in California on his way to Central America. Delany's interest in West Africa was greatly stimulated by the publication in 1857 of the works of two explorers of Africa, Thomas J. Bowen and David Livingstone.[73] In particular, it was Bowen's "intelligent and interesting account of Borubaland" which decided him on exploring the Niger Valley in search of a base for Negro nation-building.[74] Delany's enthusiasm for an expedition to Yorubaland was matched by that of Robert Campbell, a young Jamaica-born chemist, who agreed to be his assistant. When the third National Emigration Conference met in Chatham, Ontario, Canada, in August, 1858, Delany's plans had already been elaborated. The Conference endorsed

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[73]These were Thomas J. Bowen, Central Africa: Adventures and Missionary Labors in the Interior of Africa, from 1849-1856 (Charleston, 1857); and Dr. Livingstone's Seventeen Years' Explorations and Adventures in the Wilds of Africa, Edited by John Hartley Coomb (Philadelphia,1857).

[74]Delany, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, 10.

his expedition to the Niger Valley as also Holly's Haitian scheme.

Making its appearance in 1858, too, and favouring emigration to West Africa was the African Civilization Society with Henry Highland Garnet as President. Garnet was one of the most aggressive and militant of the American Negro leaders.[75] As early in 1843, he had called on Negro slaves "to rise in their might and strike a blow for their lives and liberties", a counsel which although it won the endorsement of John Brown, failed to win the support of Negro leaders.[76] He left the United States in 1850 for England, where he lectured as an abolitionist for three years. On his return to the United States in 1855, he became a strong supporter of emigration: he had no sympathy for those American Negro leaders who opposed free American Negro emigration to Africa simply because slave-holders promoted such emigration; he castigated Frederick Douglass and his associates as "humbugs who oppose everything they do not originate".[77] The main object of Garnet's Society was "to establish a grand centre of Negro nationality from which shall flow the streams of commercial, intellectual, and political power which shall make colored people everywhere respected".[78] Though he preferred such

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[75] William Wells Brown, The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements (Boston, 1863), 149-152.

[76] John W. Cromwell, The Negro in American History (Washington, 1916), 126.

[77] Weekly Anglo-African, 1 (17 Sept. 1859). Garnet further commented: "I believe that some people wouldn't go to heaven if a white man should say they must go".

[78] Weekly Anglo-African, 1 (3 Sept. 1859).

a centre to be founded in West Africa through select American Negro emigration, he was not averse to the building of a Negro state in the Americas. By 1858 a few Liberian trading vessels were plying between the Negro Republic and such eastern American ports as New York, Boston and Baltimore.[79] Garnet was impressed by this, and believed that the establishment of a vast commercial intercourse between West Africa and Negro America "would do more for the overthrow of slavery, in creating a respect for ourselves, than fifty thousand lectures of the most eloquent men of this land".[80]

In turning to West Africa as the geographical centre for their pan-Negro program, the Delany-Garnet groups were not overlooking one of their short-term objectives: the overthrow of slavery in the United States. Indeed the new plan represented a more effective strategy: it would bring about the collapse of American slavery as well as annihilate the slave trade at its source. The first object was to be attained by the planting of cotton in the selected sites with the object of underselling in the markets of the world cotton produced in the Southern States.[81] American Negroes, with their special knowledge of the cotton culture, so it was reasoned, were peculiarly well fitted to succeed in this.

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[79] Brown, Economic History of Liberia, 134.

[80] Weekly Anglo-African (17 Sept. 1859).

[81] Ibid. (3 Sept. 1859); also Delany, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, 14.

Campbell, travelling via England, preceded Delany, his fellow Commissioner, to West Africa. On 24 June 1859, he sailed from Liverpool aboard "the splendid ship, Ethiopia", in the company of an American Negro from New York, John Bennett, who had invested one hundred and twenty five dollars in two cotton gins, and was on his way to Lagos to start an independent venture in cotton growing.[82] Campbell first touched African soil at Freetown, Sierra Leone, on 12 July and here met "several ... natives... of respectability and ... education".[83] Campbell's next stop was at Cape Palmas, Liberia, where for two days he was the guest of Alexander Crummell, Principal of Mt. Vaughan High School. After a further two-day stop-over at Cape Coast, Campbell arrived at Lagos on 21 July. Through the Acting-Consul of Lagos, Lieutenant Lodder, Campbell met Okukenu, the Alake of Abeokuta, and found him amenable to the idea of select American Negro emigration into his territory. Already in the Alake's domains were several hundred emigrants - "semi-civilized liberated Africans from Sierra Leone returning to their homeland, as well as repatriates from Brazil and Cuba.[84] In Campbell's view, these emigrants "had inaugur-

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[82] Weekly Anglo-African 1 (3 Sept. 1859).

[83] Robert Campbell, A Pilgrimage to My Motherland (New York), 11.

[84] Ibid., 18. For the fullest treatment of this see, Jean F. Herskovitts, Liberated Africans and the History of Lagos Colony to 1886 (unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1960).

ated a mighty work, which ... must be continued in a higher form by the more civilized of the race". Campbell envisaged a scheme whereby emigrants would be allowed to organize themselves on "municipal" lines. But his goal was that of a "national government" and he recognized that without the co-operation and support of native Africans, this would not succeed. He therefore advised prospective emigrants to

> "ever remember that the existing rulers must be respected, for they alone are the bona fide rulers of the place. The effort should be to lift them up to the proper standard, and not to supersede or crush them."[85]

Delany, as leader of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, sailed from New York aboard the Liberian vessel, "Mendi", on 24 May, 1859, arriving in Monrovia in early July. Also aboard the "Mendi" as an emigrant to Liberia was the Rev. William C. Monroe, an episcopalian clergyman from Detroit, Michigan, a former missionary to Haiti, an ex-President of the National Emigration Conference. Monroe had come to believe that Liberia was "the chief instrument in determining the future destiny of the Negro race".[86] In Monrovia Delany was welcomed as a hero as he reported to a large public meeting including Liberians "from all parts of the country" that "the desire for African Nationality had brought me to these shores".[87] At Grand Bassa a Council

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[85] Campbell, Pilgrimage to my Motherland, 137.

[86] Weekly Anglo-African, 1 (1 Oct. 1859).

[87] Ibid.

of the most eminent Liberians approved his "mission and policy".[88] On 21 July Delany participated in the celebration of Liberia's twelfth annual Independence Day which "came off with grand effect".[89] On 1 August Delany, as well as Blyden, were speakers at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the emancipation of West Indian Negroes, an event which was attended by "all the leading citizens of Liberia".[90] Delany left Monrovia on 4 August for Cape Palmas where for six weeks he was the guest of Alexander Crummell. During his stay of two and a half months in Liberia his former opposition was turned into qualified admiration for it. He found Liberia somewhat more advanced than he had imagined. He was especially impressed with the St. Pauls River - its beautiful location, its thriving sugar and coffee plantations, its "livestocks of all kinds" and its neat brick buildings.[91] Although still wishing to see the Negro Republic more self-reliant, he was now able to recommend it to "the intelligent of the race".[92]

Blyden was among those prominent in welcoming Delany. He was ecstatic at the visit of the Negro leader and of his changed attitude

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[88] Delany, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, 23.

[89] Weekly Anglo-African, 1 (24 Sept. 1859).

[90] Weekly Anglo-African, 1 (15 Oct. 1859).

[91] Weekly Anglo-African, 1 (24 Sept. 1859).

[92] New York Colonization Journal, IX (Oct. 1859).

towards Liberia. He hailed Delany as "the far-famed champion of the elevation of colored men" and saw him as the "Moses" who would "lead the exodus of his people from the house of bondage"; he prognosticated that Liberians would yet welcome other American Negro leaders.[93]

Delany reached Lagos on September 20, spending five weeks there, during which time he won the confidence of Docemo, King of Lagos. Delany liked what he saw of Lagos; from here he wrote to Garnet:

> "Lagos is a fine, and will be a great commercial city. It is destined to be the great metropolis of this part of the world. Entirely under a black government, it only wants a few of the right stamp of black men to make it one of the most desirable cities in the world. They bid us come, and to that end the authorities have presented me with two acres of land in the heart of the city plot on which to build my residence....
>
> There will be for you and also Mr. J. T. Holly, after our return to Africa, a fine prospect in this rich city of Lagos, where Christians ... desire to have black instead of white preachers."[94]

From Lagos he went to Abeokuta, where he joined his fellow commissioner, Robert Campbell, and together they spent six weeks touring the principal cities of Yorubaland. On their return to Abeokuta, they held palavers with the Kings and Chiefs, and on December 27 signed a

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[93] New York Colonization Journal, IX (Oct. 1859).

[94] Weekly Anglo-African, 11 (Jan. 1861).

treaty which assigned to them as "Commissioners on behalf of the African race in America the right and privilege of settling in common with the Egba people, on any part of the territory belonging to Abeokuta, not otherwise occupied".[95] The signing of the treaty was witnessed by the famous African missionary, Samuel Crowther, and his son, Samuel Jr. Delany had taken the first step in "the grandest prospect for regeneration of a people that ever presented itself in the history of the world".[96]

Delany's expedition had aroused great curiosity and interest in commercial and humanitarian circles in England where attention was turning to areas of the world other than the United States for source of supply of cotton.[97] On May 17, 1860, the day after arriving in London, Delany and Campbell, on invitation, attended a meeting "of a number of noblemen and gentlemen interested in Africa's Regeneration /and Britain's welfare/ in the parlor of Dr. [Thomas] Hodgkin". A series of meetings were subsequently held, out of which grew the African Aid Society, founded to assist by "loans or otherwise" the emigration of Negroes from North America to Africa for the purpose of cultivating tropical products, including cotton, promoting "the Christian Civilization of the African Races" and "the annihilation of the slave trade". Though extremely cautious of any alliance with white organizations, Delany agreed to co-operate with the Society after he had impressed

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[95]Delany, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, 27.

[96]Ibid.

[97]New York Times, (20 Dec. 1860).

upon its members that the relations between the two groups were to be strictly those of business, and that Negro emigrants were to be completely free in managing their own affairs. "Our policy," Delany emphasized, "must be... Africa for the African race and black men to rule them."[98]

Even before Delany had left for West Africa, interest in Haitian emigration had been revived, primarily through the propaganda of James T. Holly, but the emigration movement received its greatest fillip when the Haitian Government itself gave official sanction to it. In December, 1858, Emperor Faustin Solouque had been deposed in a bloodless revolution. The new President, Fabre Geffrard, seemed bent on reforming Haitian society. Once again there were pan-Negro hopes that the old order of disunity, corruption, and stagnation would be replaced by one of stability and progress.

The Haitian "Call for Emigration" was issued on August 22, 1859 by F. E. Dubois, Secretary of State for Justice and Public Worship.[99] It assured that "Haiti has risen again from a state of prostration in which a tyrannical Government had held it." Freedom was restored and progress was at hand. Haiti's doors were now wide open to all Negroes who wished to participate in the new order. President Geffrard himself

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[98]Delany, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, 64.

[99]New York Colonization Journal, 10 (July, 1860). Also James Redpath, ed. A Guide to Hayti (Boston, 1861), 97-99.

joined in the appeal, inviting Negroes to bring "their arms and minds". He predicted "Haiti will soon regain her ancient splendor... /and/... will be a formal denial, most eloquent and peremptory, against the detractors of our race who contest our ability to attain a high degree of civilization".[100] And F. Jn. Joseph, Secretary of State for Agriculture, who was directly responsible for settling emigrants, reminded that "welcoming men of our blood, the victim of these outrageous persecutions, is to continue the work of rehabilitation undertaken by the Founders of the Republic, and to remain faithful to the National Traditions".[101] Among the agents of the Haitian Emigration Bureau were Holly and Garnet.

Meanwhile, events in the United States were continuing to give impetus to the emigration movement: the failure of the John Brown raid, the split in the Democratic Party and the founding of the avowedly anti-slavery Republican Party had further exaccerbated feelings towards the Negro and contributed towards his interest in Haiti. By January, 1861, the Haitian Emigration campaign seemed to be in full swing. After five weeks in Philadelphia, Holly reported that "the choicest spirit among our people... are thoroughly awake to the importance of the present movement and ready to give it their contribution".[102] Garnet, too, was rejoicing "to see that there are more of the colored people...

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[100] James Redpath, ed., A Guide to Hayti, see preface.

[101] Ibid., 104.

[102] Weekly Anglo-African, 11 (16 Feb. 1861).

in favor of this movement than they are of any other of the present age".[103] Indeed,by this time almost all American Negro leaders had given expression of support to Negro emigration abroad:[104] even the formidable Frederick Douglass had by March, 1861, reluctantly given in, and had accepted an invitation by the Haitian government to visit that country.

Thus, when Delany and Campbell returned to the United States in late December, 1860, they found that the feeling for emigration was even more pronounced than when they left. Delany soon let it be known that he was preparing for "a hasty return to Africa where my duty calls me". He called for the co-operation in his venture "of intelligent persons..of various occupations, among whom mechanics and cotton cultivators are acceptable".[105] Delany insisted on select emigration so as to ensure the success of his plan; for "Africa is our fatherland, we, its legitimate descendants, and we will never agree or consent to see this -- the first voluntary step that has been taken for her regeneration by her own descendants blasted".

While he observed these preparations for emigration on the part of American Negroes, Blyden continued to attempt to prepare Liberia to play its part as the vanguard of a new civilization in Africa, and to

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[103] Weekly Anglo-African, 11 (26 Jan. 1861).

[104] Howard H. Bell, "Negro Natinnalism: A Factor in Emigration Projects, 1858-61", Journal of Negro History, XLVIII (Jan. 1962), 43.

[105] Weekly Anglo-African, 11 (26 Jan. 1861).

equip himself as thoroughly as possible for leadership. So great was his own conception of the duties involved as a leader in Liberia, that despite his exemplary assiduity, he kept feeling that his knowledge and training were too limited. It is typical of him that in March 1858, one month before he was due to be ordained as a Presbyterian minister, he wrote to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions appealing for assistance to study for two years at one of their theological colleges in the United States. "I feel," he wrote, "that to start out just now as I am upon the duties of life, particularly duties of so high a character would be to invite failure."[106]

In his academic pursuits, Blyden was undoubtedly handicapped: library facilities in Liberia were almost non-existent, and he had to content himself with reading voraciously any material (mostly English and American newspapers and journals), that happened to be available. He sought to supplement his inadequate reading by seeking out interesting correspondents in England. The first of these, significantly, was an ex-teacher and clergyman, Rev. Henry Melvill, a former Principal of East India College, and at the time Canon of St. Paul's.[107] But his most important correspondent of this period was W. E. Gladstone, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer (to whom he had been attracted because of their mutual interest in classical literature, partly because

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[106] Blyden to John L. Wilson, 5 Mar. 1858, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 5.

[107] This correspondence does not seem to have survived, but Blyden first referred to it in a letter to John L. Wilson, 2 Feb. 1859, Ibid.

Gladstone's free trade views coincided with his). Blyden first wrote to the British Minister on 20 April 1860, asking for study advice in his pursuit of classical languages and literature, and for the gift of a small library composed of twelve major works in the field.[108] As justification for this request, he acquainted Gladstone with his views of Liberia's role in Africa:

> "This little Republic, planted here in great weakness, is no doubt destined, in the Providence of God, to revolutionize, for good this whole part of Africa. But we need, in order to carry out the great work - to subserve the needy purposes of our benighted people, men of enlightened minds, of enlarged views, of hightoned character."

To the responsive British Minister, Blyden further emphasized that his request for help was not a selfish one: "My desire to enlarge my education arises from the interest I feel in the progress of the Negro race, and my great anxiety is to labour with increased efficiency to promote and accelerate that progress".[109]

But even if Blyden was not satisfied that he was properly trained for his responsibilities, he certainly did not shirk these. As a clergyman, he used his pulpit as a forum of reform. Perhaps typical of his sermons at this time was his eulogy on Rev. John Day whom he held up as an example of the kind of dedicated patriotism that Liberians were to emulate. John Day was born free in North Carolina in 1797 and had grown up under comparatively favourable circumstances. Later as a cabinet maker and a Baptist clergyman he won both material and social success

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[108] Blyden to Gladstone, 20 Apr. 1860, British Museum Add.Mss.44393/271.

[109] Blyden to Gladstone, 7 Sept. 1860, British Museum Add.Mss. 44394/102.

among the free Negroes of his community. But then he caught "the flame of liberty and independence" and in 1830 emigrated to Liberia determined to help in building up a Negro nation. His ability marked him out for leadership and he applied himself with unostentatious single-mindedness until his death in 1858. The variety of his roles as missionary, teacher and founder of schools, politician, and finally Chief Justice of Liberia, attested to the demand for men of his calibre in the Negro Republic. Of his life and death, Blyden commented:

> "...there was never a time in the history of Liberia when we needed more carefully to ponder our condition; when the necessity seemed greater to hold up to our view whatever was virtuous and exemplary in the character of our fathers; that by summoning to our gaze, from those pure and lofty regions, their noble spirits; there may possibly be disposted from the midst of us that selfish and unpatriotic feeling, and that spirit of disunion which we fear are taking the place of the public spirit, the enlarged benevolence, the self-sacrificing zeal, and the spirit of unity, under the influence of which this nation was founded, and by the aid of which it had been brought this far."[110]

In an oblique criticism on Liberian leadership Blyden further commented that men like Day "had no gold and silver to lavish upon improvements; but mark their superior self-abnegation and heroism, they gave themselves". He urged: "Let us emulate their noble action. Let us not be content to live and die without doing something to ameliorate the condition of our downtrodden race. Oh! let us not be drones in the hive of humanity".[111]

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[110] Blyden, "Eulogy of Rev. John Day", in Liberia's Offering, 127.

[111] Ibid., 179.

Blyden was critical, too, of external influences which in any way tended to retard the progress of Liberia. Such an influence arose in the late 1850's with the attempt of the French Government to recruit labour from West Africa including Liberia for her West Indian colonies. Both England (1807) and France (1818) among European nations had outlawed the traffic in slaves and had subsequently abolished slavery in their colonial territories. But the demand for Negro slaves on West Indian plantations was still strong. To supply this need both governments sanctioned the recruiting of "voluntary labour" from West Africa to the West Indies.[112] But in actual operation, ruses and coercion were used to get the available labour; it was, to some extent, slave-trading in disguise. The unscrupulous and illegitimate use of force by French agents and their native sub-agents was creating or stimulating tribal fears, jealousies and unrest. Blyden saw it as his duty to expose an operation so "disastrous to Africa".[113]

But despite all these drawbacks, Blyden always saw signs of hope: writing to an American friend in December 1858, he gave as his opinion that Liberia was having a healthy influence on the natives, and added hopefully: "The native mind is undergoing a complete revolution.

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[112] As early as 1834 emigration of African labour from the West Indies to West Africa was encouraged by planters with the permission of the British Government. By 1843 some 28,000 such emigrants had been taken to the British West Indies - Friend of the African, 1 (1844) 246; also African Repository XVII (Oct. 1841), 147; it saw "this extraordinary movement of the British Government... as a departure from professions of philanthropy". The scheme continued to operate in the fifties and sixties.

[113] Blyden, "A Chapter in the History of the Slave Trade" in Liberia's Offering, 163.

There exists among them the belief that some great day is approaching for Africa - some year of golden harvest".[114] Blyden's optimism was matched by his dedication. To the same friend he later wrote poignantly: "Let me be forever discarded by the black race, and let me be contemned by the white, if I strive not with all my powers, if I putnot forth all my energies" to bring respect and dignity to the Negro race.[115]

Characteristically, Blyden's first visit abroad was in the service of the Republic. In March 1861, he made his first trip to England,having been comissioned by the Liberian Government to interest both British and American philanthropists in Liberian education. While in London he made the personal acquaintance of, among others, his old correspondents, Gladstone and Henry Melvill, as well as Lord Brougham, Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, and Samuel Gurney, all well-known humanitarians. He was able successfully to raise funds for constructing a girls' school in Liberia,[116] the education of Negro women being an important aspect of his pan-Negro programme. In Edinburgh, the young Liberian spoke eloquently before the United Presbyterian Synod about Liberia and its struggle on behalf of the Negro race.[117]

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[114] Blyden to John L. Wilson, 8 Dec. 1859, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 6.

[115] Blyden to Wilson, 9 June 1860, Ibid.

[116] Blyden to Wilson, 8 June 1861, Ibid.

[117] New York Colonization Journal, XI (June, 1861).

Gladstone had been so impressed with Blyden that he had offered, together with the Bishop of Oxford and Lord Brougham, to support the young Liberian at a British University. But although grateful, Blyden's strong sense of duty triumphed over his natural inclination: "It is, and has been for years", he replied, "my earnest and all-controlling desire to obtain a thorough education in order to fit myself efficiently for the purpose of my needy and down-trodden race, but such are my engagements now, that I cannot leave them to hold converses with the muses of England".[118] He further explained that "The boys who are being instructed in my school, will, many of them go into the interior to open up the country, and teach the natives the arts of civilized life".[119]

If Blyden could not accept the generous offer of the British Chancellor, he tried to get him to be of service to Liberia. The British Consulship there had recently been closed as part of a general British economy measure. Blyden saw this as a blow to Liberia's prestige and pressed Gladstone to use his influence to have a consul reappointed, pointing out that such an appointment would accrue to the advantage of both countries:

> "I assure you, Sir, that the reappointment of a consul at Monrovia will be of great importance to Liberia - to the tribes of our vicinity, and to British commerce. A resident consul, who would take interests in such matters,

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[118] Blyden to Gladstone, 23 Mar. 1861, British Museum Add. Mss. 44395/23.

[119] Ibid.

> could do much to encourage and develop the cotton trade, an article of spontaneous growth all over Liberian territory."[120]

Also appointed commissioner to the United States was Alexander Crummell, who was Blyden's chief supporter in Liberia in fostering pan-Negro nationalism. When American-born Crummell despairingly left the United States in 1847 at the age of thirty-six, he was already a well-known Episcopalian clergyman, reformer and abolitionist. After getting his B.A. from Queen's College, Cambridge, he emigrated to Liberia where he became an important educator. Like Blyden he sought to bring Liberians to a consciousness of the high responsibility which devolved upon them.[121] He wanted to see Liberia's influence and jurisdiction over the natives grow, and took a leading part in organizing schemes for exploring and opening up the interior. But perhaps his most imporant contribution to the pan-Negro idea was his open letter written in September, 1860, on "The Relation and Duties of Free Colored Men in America to Africa". His purpose in this letter was to win the support of all American Negro leaders, both emigrationists and anti-emigrationists, for Liberia. To appease the anti-emigrationists, he rejected the idea that America could never be the home of the Negro, but he maintained that the task of civilizing Africa was peculiarly that of westernized Negroes: ("Without doubt God designs great things

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[120] Blyden to Gladstone, 23 Mar. 1861, British Museum Add. Mss. 44395/23.

[121] See, for example, Alexander Crummell, The Duty of a Rising Christian State (London, 1856).

for Africa and ... black men themselves are without doubt to be the chief instruments"). This could be done by voluntary emigration, by American Negroes pooling their economic resources and inaugurating a vast trade between America and West Africa, and by an intensification of American Negro missionary activities which would "build up churches and lay the foundation of Christian colleges and Universities".[122] By utilizing this combination of commerce and Christianity, not only would Africa be civilized, but American Negroes would grow wealth and respected:

> "At an early date whole fleets of vessels, manned and officered from the U.S. and Liberia, would outrival all other agencies which are now being used for grasping West African commerce. Large and important houses will spring up into existence among you ... Wealth will flow into your coffers, and affluence would soon exhibit itself amid all your associations. The reproach of penury and the consciousness of impotency in all your relations would rapidly depart. And as a people you would soon be able to make yourselves a felt element in society in all the relations of life, on the soil where you were born.
>
> The kings and tradesmen of Africa, having the demonstration of negro capacity before them, would hail the presence of their black kinsmen from America and would be stimulated to a generous emulation ... To the farthest interior, leagues and combinations would be formed with the men of commerce, and thus civilization, enlightenment and Christianity would be carried to every state and town, and village of the interior of Africa."[123]

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[122] Alexander Crummell, The Relations and Duties of the Free Colored Men in America to Africa (Hartford, 1861), 27.

[123] Ibid., 25.

Crummell had preceded Blyden to the United States and the latter joined him there in June 1861 via Toronto, Canada. Two months earlier the conflict between Northern abolitionists and Southern slave-holders had erupted into civil war. And one immediate consequence of the war was the stemming of the tide of feeling for emigration: the anti-emigrationist leaders who had recently and reluctantly given in to the strong emigrationist sentiments among the masses of Negroes, now urged them to stay and help to decide the outcome of the struggle, an advice which found quick response. But the die-hard emigrationist at first seemed undaunted. By May, both Delany and Campbell had joined forces with Garnet's African Civilization Society in a concerted attempt to raise adequate funds to promote colonization in the Niger Valley.[124] Campbell "appearing in native African costume," lectured regularly on West Africa and vowed that "My home shall be in Africa though I be the only person from America".[125] In November the Society received an important accession of strength through the support of men in high offices in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.[126]

Both Blyden and Crummell joined battle on the side of the emigrationists. Blyden himself welcomed the war as the "purifier of a demoralised American conscience",[127] and no doubt as a means of bringing

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[124] Constitution of the African Civilization Society (Hartford,1861),1.

[125] Weekly Anglo-African, 11 (16 March 1861). Campbell did keep his word and emigrated to Lagos in 1862 and in the following year founded the colony's first newspaper, The Anglo-African which was published until Dec. 1865.

[126] Constitution of the African Civilization Society, 4.

[127] Blyden to Gladstone, 16 June 1862, British Museum Add.Mss.44398/301.

slavery to an end. But he saw no reason why this should affect the plans of American Negroes for emigration to West Africa. He warned American Negroes that they refused to return to Africa at their own peril:

> "If you turn away from the work which Providence evidently calls you with the selfish hope of elevating yourself in this country, beware lest the calamities come upon you which are threatened to those who neglect to honor their parents. I give it as my most serious conviction, that there will be no real prosperity among the Africans in this land, no proper respect shown them by the dominant race, so long as they persist, as a mass, in ignoring the claims of Africa upon them. All their efforts at self-elevation here which shall leave Africa out of the question, will be as 'sowing seeds to the wind'."[128]

He urged them to be makers and witnesses of history:

> "It need not imply any pretensions to prophetic insight, for us to declare that we live in the shadows of remarkable events in the history of Africa - events whose consequences would be of transcendent importance and unending interest, not only to the down-trodden but to the whole human race."[129]

And Crummell, for his part, was challengingly asserting that "the free black man of this country ... is superior to the Russian, the Polander, the Italian", and was now "in a state of preparedness for a new world's history, for a mission of civilization".[130] Alluding to the historical phenomenon of the rise and fall of civilizations,

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[128] Edward W. Blyden, A Hope for Africa, (New York, 1861), 17.

[129] Ibid., 16.

[130] African Repository, XXXVII (Sept. 1861), 279.

Crummell discerned the decline of that of the Anglo-Saxon, as witness "the moral and political convulsion" in the United States. But "now the Negro is rising and will rise ... God has destined a great future for the Negro race on the continent of Africa, a civilization of a new type and more noble and generous... than has existed, is on the eve of starting a new life".[131]

When Blyden and Crummell left for Liberia in the fall of 1861 they had, as yet, no reasons to believe that the American Negro impulse towards colonization in Africa had been checked: their audiences had been enthusiastic and the Delany-Garnet group had not yet abandoned its plan for Negro colonization in the Niger Valley. Thus, they reported the yearning of American Negroes for Africa. By now, more Liberians, on their part, were showing a consciousness of the pan-Negro role Liberia might play. With the incorporation of Maryland into Liberia in 1857 and the purchase of additional territories in the area of the Mano and Gallinas Rivers, the Negro Republic commanded a coastline of more than five hundred miles. And in the decade ending 1860, the Negro Republic had settled the unprecedented total of five hundred twenty-nine emigrants from America - almost as many as had been settled in the thirty previous years,[132] and were looking forward to welcoming more American Negroes. In the

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[131] African Repository, XXXVII (Sept. 1861), 279.

[132] American Colonization Society, Fifty-second Annual Report (Washington, 1869), see inside back cover.

late 1860's, Rev. James Payne, later to become President of the Republic, wrote a series of articles in the Liberia Herald entitled "A Plea for Liberia" with a view "to arrest the attention of colored friends of the United States and direct their attention to the land of their fathers". And Vice-President Warner was gratified that "Liberia had begun to make a favorable impression abroad among whites and colored" and hoped that American Negroes would "reestablish themselves in this our fatherland".[133] Liberian interest in the feeling for emigration among American Negroes reflected itself in legislation authorizing the appointment of "suitable commissioners to present the cause of Liberia to the descendants of Africa in that country, and to lay before them the claims that Africa has upon sympathies, and the paramount advantages that would accrue to them, their children, and their race, by their return to their fatherland".[134] On 18 March 1862, President Benson appointed as such commissioners Blyden, Crummell and J. D. Johnson, a wealthy merchant.

The advocates of Liberia had yet another - and special reason - to press its claim for the support of Negroes of the Americas: by 1861 constructionon Liberia College - the first secular English-speaking institution of higher learning in tropical Africa - was all but completed. Both Blyden and Crummell had been appointed Professors in the new institution which Delany regarded as "a grand stride in the march of African Re-

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[133] African Repository, XXXVI (Jan. 1861), 87.

[134] American Colonization Society, Forty-sixth Annual Report (Washington, 1863) 6.

generation and Negro Nationality". Giving the inaugural address at the opening of the College on 23 January 1862, Blyden was optimistic that it would attract Negro scholars and students from all parts as also "draw towards us the attention and respect of the civilized world". He hailed the institution as "the precursor of incalculable blessings to this benighted land - as the harbinger of a bright and happy future for science, literature, and art for the noblest interest of the African".[135]

In March 1862, for the second time in two years, Blyden and Crummell, as representatives of their Government, left Liberia for England and America. Staying off at Freetown, Sierra Leone, for a few days, they sought to excite the interest of the educated Africans there in the Negro Republic.[136] In England Blyden spent much time trying to disseminate knowledge about Liberia. He also visited some British institutions of higher learning, including Cambridge University, as part preparation for his "novel and responsible position" as Professor of Classics at Liberia College.[137]

Blyden arrived in the United States in early June 1862, and immediately headed South for Washington, and for his first experiences in some aspects of American segregation and discrimination: in Phila -

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[135] Blyden, "Inaugural Address at the Inauguration of Liberia College", Liberia's Offering, 123.

[136] New York Colonization Journal, XII (July 1862).

[137] Blyden to Gladstone, 16 Apr. 1862, British Museum Add.Mss. 44398/183.

delphia he was shocked to find that "no colored person was allowed to ride in the street-cars of which the city is so full". From Philadelphia to Washington he was forced to travel in a smoking car "with all sorts of ruffians and vagabonds, spitting and swearing, and doing everything but what is agreeable to a gentleman". His pride hurt, his dignity ruffled, Blyden poured forth a torrent of flaming anger:

> "All the way to Washington, a feeling of degradation held possession of me. I felt that I would rather be a denizen of Marmora's town[138], with all its attendant disadvantages, than be compelled, as a black man, to live in this country; that I would rather go naked and wander among the natives of the interior than occupy the position of some of the 'respectable colored people' I see here. For then I should feel that I was in a country of my own - untrammelled by the prejudice of 'white trash' to which many of these intelligent and respectable colored people so willingly submit, fondly hoping for the day when things will be better for them.
>
> I thought how sad it was that so many colored people seem disposed to cling to this land - fearing to go to Liberia, lest they die of fever. But are they <u>living</u> in this country? Their colour is the sign of every insult and contumely! Everybody and everything is preferred to them. Afraid of dying! Would it not be much better for the whole five million of them to leave this country, if everyone died in the process of acclimation (sic) in a land (sic) than to remain in servitude at the base of society? A whole race in degradation! The idea is horrible. If they all went and died it would be a noble sacrifice to liberty."[139]

Nor were his experiences in the national capital less aggravating. He wrote complaining to Gladstone:

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[138] A native town in the interior of Liberia. Marmora is, of course, the name of the native king.

[139] <u>New York Colonization Journal</u>, Xii (Nov. 1862).

> "Though Congress has acknowledged Liberian independence,[140] I, as a citizen of Liberia was not allowed to enter the House of Representatives during the session because I was a black man; and before I could leave that distinguished city, I was obliged to get a white man to vouch that I was a free man."

Blyden went on to observe that the war had brought no advantages to the Negro:

> "It has not yet assumed a moral aspect; it is purely political - the leading men ... having no idea of freeing the slaves. They are desirous of restoring the union on its former basis. The oppression seems to be intensifying. In the district of Columbia which has been freed by an Act of Congress (April 16, 1862), the Fugitive Slave Law is in active operation."[141]

For the next five weeks Blyden, sometimes accompanied by Crummell, toured the "principal cities of the North" extending the Liberian invitation to American Negroes. On this tour Blyden noticed that the feeling for emigration among American Negroes had cooled perceptibly. He began to berate his Negro audiences for lack of pride in Africa and a want of feeling of duty towards it. He castigated Negroes for merely expressing "an indolent and unmeaning sympathy - a sympathy which put forth no effort, made no sacrifices, endured no self-denial, braved no obloquy for the sake of advancing African interests".[142] He tried to convince his audience that the bringing of

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[140] Congress did not recognize Liberia as a sovereign nation until the spring of 1862 largely because of the influence of Southern slaveholders who maintained that Negroes were only fit to be slaves.

[141] Blyden to Gladstone, 16 June 1862, op.cit.

[142] Blyden, "The Call of Providence to the Descendants of Africa in America", Liberia's Offering, 69.

Negroes to the New World was all part of a grand Providential design - the ultimate purpose of which was the civilizing of Africa by westernized Negroes. He urged them to recognize this divine call and return to "inherit" Africa before it was "usurped" by Europeans.[143]

To this highly subjective interpretation of the divine will, Blyden added a plea based on pride of race:

> "An African nationality is our great need, and God tells us by his Providence that he has set the land before us, and bid us go up and possess it. We shall never receive the respect of other races until we establish a powerful nationality. We should not content ourselves living among other races, simply by their permission or their endurance ... We must build up negro states; we must establish and maintain the various institutions; we must make and administer laws, erect and preserve churches ... we must have governments; we must have legislation of our own: we must build ships and navigate them; we must ply the trades, instruct the schools, control the press, and thus aid in shaping mankind. Nationality is an ordinance of Nature. The heart of every true Negro yearns after a distinct and separate nationality."[144]

Liberia was offering such:

> "Liberia, with outstretched arms earnestly invites all to come. We call them forth out of all nations; we bid them to take up their all and leave the country of their exile... We summon them from these States, from the Canadas, from the East and the West Indies, from everywhere, to come and take part with us in our great work."

But Liberia's gesture and the stirring pleas of Blyden and Crummell were to little avail. For, appearance to the contrary, the outbreak of the Civil War was the signal for dropping schemes for emigration: Negroes were hopeful that the South would be crushed and that

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[143] Blyden, "The Call of Providence to the Descendants of Africa in America", Liberia's Offering, 75.

[144] Ibid., 76.

they would receive the rights and privileges of American citizenship. The emigrationists, who had at first regarded the war as irrelevant to their plans, were unable to act because of lack of funds. By early 1862, all Negro leaders were again united to work for the victory of the North. Indeed, when in the summer of 1862, Lincoln decided to put into effect his scheme for gradual Negro emancipation with colonization[145], he got no support from American Negro leaders. To Blyden's keen disappointment this phase of pan-Negro nationalism had failed to convert itself into a creative historic force.

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[145] Walter H. Fleming, "Historic Attempts to Solve the Race Problem in America by Deportation", Journal of American History, IV, (1910), 202-04.

Chapter Two

BLYDEN: PAN-NEGRO EFFORTS, 1862-71

Keenly disappointed though he was that the pan-Negro impulse which emanated among American Negroes in the decadebefore the start of the Civil War was not translated into action, Blyden did not and indeed never did give up his pan-Negro ideal. Almost singlehandedly he continued to keep alive a pan-Negro vision for the race, even though he met continuously with frustrations and disappointments. There were, of course, developments in and modifications of his pan-Negro thinking, but throughout there are constant and recurring themes: that the Negro did have a worthy history and could make an even more significant contribution to world civilization than he had done in the past; that New World Negroes were to play the dominant role in regenerating Africa; that Europe had an important but subsidiary role to play in Africa; that Islam in Africa, unlike Christianity, was working to promote the pan-Negro goal. This chapter covers the period, 1862-71, during which time Blyden was Professor of Greek and Latin at Liberia College, and, in addition, was twice Secretary of State in the years 1864-66. It will deal primarily with his further efforts to foster Negro emigration from the West Indies and the United States, and of his other efforts to promote the welfare of Liberia which were frustrated by a conflict and struggle for power between the Negroes

and mulattoes and which resulted in Blyden having to flee the Negro Republic in 1871.

When, in the late summer of 1862, Blyden realized that American Negroes had given up plans for emigration, he turned his attention instead to West Indian Negroes. As we have already seen, West Indian Negroes had, ever since their emancipation, shown a marked interest in emigrating to Africa.[1] Blyden hoped to keep this spirit of emigration alive until a scheme for regular emigration could be implemented. From the United States, he revisited St. Thomas in November 1862, and through his sermons in the Dutch Reformed Church, and circulated pamphlets, he had the islanders giving thought to emigrating to Liberia.[2] Stimulated by this propaganda, "the most prominent Negroes" of the island founded the St. Thomas-Liberia Association to disseminate information about Liberia and encourage emigration. Blyden also visited Bermuda where he found "intelligent and hard working Negroes anxious to emigrate".[3] In addition, he despatched circulars to the other West Indian islands, extending the invitation of the Liberian Government to Negroes there. Before his return to Liberia, he visited eastern Canada and exhorted the Negro communities of

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[1]See above, pp. 15-17.

[2]Blyden, Liberia's Offering, see introduction; also Blyden, The Jewish Question, 6.

[3]African Repository, XXXIX (May 1863), 140.

Halifax and Windsor, Nova Scotia, and St. John's, New Brunswick, to emigrate to the Negro Republic.[4]

Blyden returned to Liberia in February 1863, and took up his appointment as Professor of Greek and Latin at Liberia College. But, in a country where there was a grave shortage of skilled or educated men, he found it difficult to confine himself solely to one job. When his friend and colleague, Daniel B. Warner, became President of the Republic in 1864, Blyden accepted an appointment as Secretary of State, the most important position in the Cabinet.[5] In this capacity he continued his efforts to attract West Indian Negroes to Liberia. His circular to the West Indian islands had fallen on fertile soil. From the Cape Coast, L. M. McKenzie, a West Indian missionary and "lover of his Fatherland" reported to Crummell his knowledge that Negroes in British Guiana and St. Kitts had "fallen in with Blyden's circular" and were anxious to emigrate to Liberia.[6] In Barbados, the "Fatherland Union Society", and the "Barbados Company for Liberia" were formed to promote emigration to the Negro Republic.[7] By November 1863, the Barbadians had communicated to the Liberian Government

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[4] Loc.cit.

[5] A. D. Banks Henries, Civics for Liberian Schools (London, 1954), 70.

[6] Rev. L. M. McKenzie to Crummell, 13 Sept. 1864, enc. in Crummell to Coppinger, 5 Oct. 1864, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 13.

[7] John McLain to Blyden, 1 Apr. 1865, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13.

their readiness to emigrate. After receiving authorization from the Liberian Legislature, President Warner responded by issuing a proclamation in February 1864 to the "Brethren of the Antilles... of all classes and pursuits" to come to Liberia to "build up an African Nationality". It advised: "The Republic of Liberia, whose independence is acknowledged by all the leading nations of the world, seems to be the most suitable starting point from which the returning exiles may begin to take possession of and civilize this long neglected land and thus aid in restoring to this ancient cradle of civilization her pristine glory".[8] The legislative council voted the sum of four thousand dollars towards helping to defray the expenses of the emigration scheme, and as an added inducement, offered twenty-five acres of land to the head of each family as compared to ten hitherto granted.

The sum voted by the Liberian legislature for the emigration scheme was hardly enough to cover the expenses of one trip from Barbados to Liberia, but Blyden hoped to get financial help from America. On 8 March 1864 he wrote to John B. Pinney, Secretary of the New York Colonization Society and Consul-General of Liberia in New York, authorising him to negotiate for the charter of the ship, "M.C.Stevens", owned by the American Colonization Society, to take emigrants from the West Indies to Liberia at least twice a year.[9] He also wrote to the

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[8]"A Proclamation To the Descendants of Africa Throughout the West Indian Islands", A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13, No. 10.

[9]Blyden to J. B. Pinney, 8 March 1864, Ibid.

Secretary of the American Colonization Society explaining the decision of the Liberian Government, and pointing out the need for urgent action on it:

> "...the circumstances of our country - the dangers that threaten - the opening up of rapid advancement in agricultural wealth owing to the great demand now prevalent for tropical products, in a word, all our political and material interests dictate our present course and duty too plainly for mistake. Our necessity permits hardly a moment for delay or vacillation. European colonies in our vicinity seem determined to annoy us, unless we can occupy all our frontiers. There is ground for apprehension that unless our population increase we shall be gradually encroached upon by foreigners until we shall have more trouble and annoyance from this source than we have yet from the aborigines."[10]

Blyden went on to explain that "Providence" had provided the answer in West Indian Negroes, who were ready to emigrate if the means of transportation were provided.

Since the outbreak of the Civil War, very few American Negroes had volunteered for emigration to Liberia, even though the American Colonization Society had money in its coffers and was eager to carry on its work. Yet it was doubtful whether its funds could be used to help West Indian Negroes to emigrate, as its constitution expressly stated that it had been formed to colonise American Negroes in Africa. Fortunately for Blyden, a man who had befriended him while he was a frightened youth in the United States, William Coppinger, a former Secretary of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society, became Secretary

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[10] Blyden to the Sec. of the American Colonization Society, 8 March, 1864, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13, No. 10.

of the American Colonization in April 1864. Coppinger was sympathetic to Blyden's request, and through his influence, the Executive Committee of the American Colonization Society temporarily set aside the constitution and generously appropriated ten thousand dollars for use towards defraying the cost of the first trip of West Indians to Liberia.[11] At the same meeting the Rev. John McLain, the treasurer of the Society, was appointed to go to Barbados to select the emigrants. Of hundreds of volunteers, three hundred and forty-six were selected. The brig "Cora" was chartered for this voyage, and the British Governor, having satisfied himself that the"Queen's subjects were (well) provided for", the expedition left on 6 April for Liberia.[12]

The Barbadian emigrants, perhaps the most select and highly skilled group ever to emigrate to Liberia, arrived without loss of life on 10 May, and were settled at Careysburg in the vicinity of the St. Paul's river. The new emigrants made an impressive showing: an eyewitness reported that at a thanksgiving service, "The lesson was read by Mr. Barclay,[13] one of the newly arrived; the choir was composed of Barbadians.... It was an impressive occasion". It was also an inspiring one: "We shall

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[11] The American Colonization Society, Forty-ninth Annual Report (Washington, 1866), 7.

[12] Ibid., 8.

[13] One of his sons, Arthur Barclay, was to play an important role in the public affairs of the Republic, culminating with his occupancy of the Presidency for eight years (1900-1912).

take new courage, regird our armour and go forth with renewed energy .... After the lapse of so long a period... the coming of such a body who show superior fitness... is an event doubly cheering",[14] a Liberian reported.

On 14 May 1865, in a sermon preached at Trinity Church, Monrovia, Alexander Crummell welcomed the Barbadians "to a common burden of duty and obligatinns in this infant state", and urged them to "go forth with high resolve". Noting the gentle flow of New World Negroes to all parts of West Africa, he predicted that this was a mere prelude: "The sons of Africa will soon arise and come in crowds... to these shores".[15]

And yet, planned Negro emigration from the West Indies to Liberia came to an abrupt end. Nor was it from want of the determination of men like Blyden, Crummell and Warner to promote it, or the genuine desire of many West Indians to emigrate. West Indians who could afford their passages were getting to West Africa through their own arrangements.[16] And from Barbados, McLain reported to Blyden that he had been "obliged to decline many persons who wanted to go". He explained that he could have easily raised "another company as large and as respectable as the first, but the means are lacking".[17] Inadequate

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[14]Dr. Laing to McLain, 18 May 1865, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13.

[15]Alexander Crummell, Africa and America (Springfield, Mass. 1891), 429.

[16]Warner to Coppinger, 6 May 1865, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13.

[17]McLain to Blyden, 7 Sept. Ibid.

finance - that was the major stumbling block to the success of Blyden's scheme for a regular West Indian emigration to Liberia. The American Colonization Society, its constitution apart, could not hope to raise money in the United States to finance West Indian emigration. Nor had it given up hopes of persuading American Negroes to emigrate to Liberia. And the Liberian Government, for its part, could not afford so expensive an operation.

Disappointed that lack of funds had caused West Indian Negro emigration to Liberia to fail, Blyden turned hopefully again to American Negroes who could, if they wished, still accept the facilities offered by the American Colonization Society to emigrate to Liberia. He had watched closely the course of the American Civil War and the fortunes of the American Negro. In a long letter he wrote to Gladstone in the summer of 1864 he summed up his views on the subject of the war and race relations, condemning the North for its amoral attitude and the South for its reactionary adherence to the idea of Negro slavery:

> "The fact is, that, even now, in the midst of all the noise about the freedom of the blacks... those coloured people in the North called by mockery free people are a race of helots or Yahoos in the estimation of the whites generally. The whites exclude them from their family circles, their schools, their pulpits, their pews, their own omnibuses.... Whatever concessions have been made to the blacks have been owing to the pressure of English sentiment in withholding full sympathy until the war as waged by the North shall assume a more decided character for freedom. No thanks to the Federals for the President's Emancipation Proclamation. (1 Jan. 1863). If the Union could be restored by its repeal, they would unite for its repeal. But God rules. He wills the freedom of the blacks. He has work for them to do in Africa....

> The so-called Confederate States are worse than the Federals. They are openly and boastfully wicked. They declare it as the policy of the government they are trying to establish to adhere to the brutalization of the Negro - making African slavery the corner stone of their national fabric. Africans everywhere feel it a sacred duty to pray for their downfall. They can never succeed in firmly establishing themselves. They have the prayers of a whole race of oppressed men against them. Of all the families ... that have ever claimed admittance into the family of nations, the confederate states of America are certainly the most shameless - the most hideous and unsightly: claiming as they do to build themselves on the blood and bones of a feeble people...."[18]

If American Negroes shared Blyden's views of both the North and the South, they did not show it in a desire to emigrate. In May 1864, Coppinger reported to Blyden that Negro emigration to Liberia was for the present unlikely because of "the greatly exalted expectations for the exercise of social and political rights in the land of their birth".[19] He added consolingly that this optimism could not last long "and there... will be a grand exodus of these people to Liberia as their only refuge". McLain expressed a similar view, correctly pointing out that even the abolitionists were keen on having the Negro stay in the country because "they are and will be needed ... as laborers". But he, too, admitted that "the prospects for the Negro in the country was dark ... so their feelings may change".[20]

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[18] Blyden to W. E. Gladstone, 16 June 1864, British Museum Add. MSS. 44398/301.

[19] Coppinger to Blyden, 7 May 1864, Coppinger Letter-books, Vol. 1.

[20] McLain to Blyden, 7 Sept. 1864, A.C.S.Papers, Vol, 13.

Events in the United States had justified at least a cautious optimism on the part of American Negroes. On 1 January 1863, Lincoln had issued his Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves, and at the same time officially sanctioned the use of Negro troops in the war. Negroes regarded themselves as fighting primarily for their liberty and civil rights which they hoped to enjoy at the termination of the conflict. This mood of hopefulness was reflected at the National Conference of Coloured Men held in Syracuse, New York, in October 1864. Here Garnet alone argued that continuing discrimination still justified plans for Negro emigration to Africa,[21] but a few months later when he became the first Negro to deliver a sermon in the Federal House of Representatives,[22] even his enthusiasm for emigration must have cooled. The rest of the Conference, firmly committed to staying in America, were prepared to struggle for rights which were still denied the Negro. With Douglass presiding, the Conference issued a "Declaration of Wrongs and Rights as an "Address to the People of the United States"; it also organized a National Equal Rights League. In the South, too, towards the end of the war, Negroes were organizing local mass meetings demanding equality of rights. The passage of the thirteenth amendment to the United States Constitution, on 18 December 1865, outlawing slavery, seemed a gain in this direction.

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[21] Proceedings of the National Convention of Colored Men... (Boston, 1864), 10.

[22] A Memorial Discourse; by Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, Delivered in the Hall of the House of Representatives, ... on 12 Feb. 1865... (Philadelphia, 1865).

At last, too, Negroes had written a chapter in American history of which they were proud: they had played an outstanding role in helping to secure victory for the North. Operating for the most part under inequitable conditions, and assured, when captured, of merciless treatment from the Confederate army, Negro troops, nevertheless, performed so well as to win the respect of their former detractors. In other spheres of the war Negro contribution was equally outstanding.[23] Blyden noted with pride "the heroic deeds of our brethren in the United States":

> "Indeed, we should be unpardonably indifferent if we could remain silent and unmoved spectators of heroism, unlooked for by their oppressors, as they have displayed. We feel proud of their martial deeds and their valorous demeanour. We rejoice with them in their brilliant achievements and magnificent success. They have produced a most wonderful impression upon the minds of those who formerly stigmatized them as idle, vicious, and lazy. Such has been the revolution in public sentiment, which their prowess has achieved that, whereas in former times, a powerful tide of odium ran against the men who attempted to advocate their right to liberty, and there was a smile of general connivance, if not approbation, given to those who contended for their perpetual servitude; now, the contest is not whether the Negro shall be free, but whether he shall be raised to equal political rights and privileges with his former masters."[24]

But although he recognized that their status had improved, he remained convinced that Negroes would never achieve equality with whites in the

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[23] See Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War (Boston, 1953).

[24] Edward W. Blyden, Our Origin, Dangers, and Duties. The Annual Address before the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Monrovia, 26 July 1865 (New York, 1865), 36.

United States. He warned that

> "...half the time and energy that will be spent by them in struggles against caste... if devoted to the building up of a home and nationality of their own would produce results immeasurably more useful and satisfactory. We know that the gale of public applause, which now fans them into a lustre of such splendid estimation, is evanescent and temporary; and we say to them... better is a lowly home among your own people than the most brilliant residence among strangers."[25]

Blyden's warning was timely. For the humbled South was in no mood to be generous to the Negro. No sooner had the war ended than the white legislatures in the former rebel states enacted "black codes" which restricted the rights and movements of freedmen. Indeed, the end of the war was the signal for a reign of white terror in many parts of the South: hundreds of unarmed freedmen were massacred, and Negro men, women, and children were brutalized in every conceivable way.[26] Also, by February 1866, it was clear that Southern Negroes were not going to receive the "Forty Acres and a Mule" which the humane Senator Thaddeus Stevens had led them to expect, and which could have provided the economic basis from which Negroes could work to attain real equality.

Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that the thought of emigration should again spring to the minds of many Negroes. On 22 April 1866, Coppinger wrote informing Blyden that "quite a spirit of

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[25] Blyden, Our Origin, Dangers, and Duties. The Annual Address before the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Monrovia, 26 July 1865 (New York, 1865), 36.

[26] Lerone Bennett, Before the Mayflower (Chicago, 1962), 193. Bennett quotes from the report of General Carl Schurz, who had made a special investigation of postwar conditions in the South for President Grant.

emigration to Africa has sprung up among the freedmen", and the American Colonization Society would be "fully taxed to find the means to send all who may apply for passage and settlement".[27] In that year the Society sent six hundred and twenty-one emigrants to Liberia, a number which slightly exceeded the annual average of the previous decade when emigration to the Republic was at its height. In 1867, six hundred and thirty-three emigrants were sent out; in 1868, four hundred and fifty-three. Then emigration tapered off sharply again.

As in previous years, the feeling for emigration was a true barometer of the pressure being exerted on Negroes. The fall in the number of emigrants after 1868 was due partly, as Coppinger pointed out to Blyden, to the fact that "the temper of the country was hostile to colonization"[28] and therefore the means for this purpose could not be easily obtained, partly, and perhaps more importantly, because the start of Radical Reconstruction in the South had again raised the hopes of Negroes. The violent vindictiveness of the South had brought its own nemesis: the North, goaded by the high-minded Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens, had gave the Negro his civil and political rights and treated white southerners somewhat like vanquished traitors. On 2 March 1867 Congress passed the first of a series of Reconstruction

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[27]Coppinger to Blyden, 22 April 1866, Coppinger Letter-Books, Vol. 3.

[28]Coppinger to Blyden, 27 April 1868, Ibid.

Acts which divided the former Confederate states into five military districts under the command of Northern generals. The fourteenth amendment to the Constitution passed on 28 July 1868 gave civil rights to Negroes while disenfranchising "the great majority of Southerners".[29] The fifteenth amendment passed on 30 March 1870 was meant to ensure the political rights of Negroes.

A new and promising era seemed to have been ushered in for the Southern Negro: he was seemingly protected by Federal troops and given his civil and political rights. Nor did he hesitate to use his new-won rights. He filled practically the whole range of state political offices, and to the amazement of sceptics, showed ability comparable to his white counterpart. But Blyden remained unimpressed with these gains. He continued to maintain that American Negroes were too optimistic about their future in the United States:

> "They are now ... carried away by the fascinating and absorbing speculations about the rights and privileges they are to enjoy in that land. Numerous politicians are endeavouring to advance their own ambitious purposes by agitating questions of the black man's future in the United States. But unless they can succeed in altering the estimation of the negro entertained by the masses of white men in that country; unless they can effectively remove the predominant, if not instinctive feeling, that he is, in some way, an alien and inferior being; unless they can succeed in bringing to pass a general and honorable amalgamation, so as to render the social and domestic interest of the two people identical - they will contribute nothing to the solution of the black man's difficulties." [30]

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[29] John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom (New York, 1956), 311.

[30] Quoted in American Colonization Society, Fiftieth Annual Report (Washington, 1867), 15.

Two years later, he was still finding it "difficult... to understand how, with the history of the past accessible and the facts of the present before their eyes ... they can hope for any distinct, appreciable influence in the country".[31] He believed that the large European emigration to the United States which was then taking place would make it even more difficult for Negroes to make progress. He felt that Negroes could solve their problems in the United States only at the risk of being completely absorbed by the Caucasian. Indeed, he feared that this would happen, resulting in the obliteration of the Negro type in that country. For him this would have been a great tragedy because he felt that Africa could use every genuine American Negro. So he continued to repeat "with undiminished earnestness the wish ... that the eys of the blacks may be opened to discern their true mission and destiny. that, making their escape from the house of bondage, they may betake themselves to their ancestral home, and assist in constructing a Christian Empire".[32] But if in 1871 the lot of the American Negro seemed immeasurably better than it had ever been, as we shall see in a later chapter, Blyden's prognostication that the Negro would always remain on the lowest rung of American society was soon to be justified when the white South began systematically to terrorize Negroes out of their new-won rights.

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[31] Blyden, "The Negro in Ancient History", The People of Africa, 32.

[32] Ibid., 34.

In Liberia itself Blyden's scheme for West Indian Negro emigration had met with strong opposition. First, some Liberians protested against the fact that the heads of West Indian families were giventwenty-five acres as compared with ten acres hitherto granted to the heads of American families; so sharp a cleavage arose over the issue that the Act authorizing the larger land grant for West Indian families had to be repealed. Further, they questioned the desirability of West Indian Negroes. Representative of this group was ex-President J.J.Roberts. Although he had found the Barbadian emigrants "an interesting and well-selected group", he, nonetheless, thought them better suited for living in Sierra Leone "where the manners and customs of the people are more English, and ... more adapted to their early habits".[33] He feared that "they might not be entirely identified with the country".

The difference of opinion which had arisen over the desirability of West Indian Negroes, was, to a large extent, symptomatic of a power struggle between two groups in Liberia - the one black and the other

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[33]J. J. Roberts to Coppinger, 15 May 1865, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13.

mulatto.[34] The accession of black intelligent West Indians was not much to the liking of the mulattoes. For, the colour problem of America had reproduced itself in Liberia as a dividing and disruptive influence: here near-white replaced white as the badge of

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[34]This aspect of Liberian history in the nineteenth century has been commented upon by several writers: see Winwood Reade, The African Sketch Book (London, 1873), Vol. 11, 257-258. Reade who spent three months in Liberia in 1870 wrote in part: "There are no real politics in Liberia ... The real parties consist of mulattoes and negroes". See, too, African Times, X (23 June 1871): A Liberian wrote: "There has been for a long time a great division amongst the black population and mulattoes, or half-caste. The mulattoes look down on the blacks as inferior, and claim the right to govern, and want to have always a mulatto or half-caste as President." Perhaps the most important nineteenth century statement on this came from John H. Smyth, United States Minister to Liberia, see Smyth to William M. Evarts, 26 April 1879, in Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (Washington, 1879), No. 321, pp. 712-717. In part he wrote: "This hybrid class the unwritten history of Liberia declared to be superior in intellectual development ... to the native or emigrant negro... The government was formed with the aboriginal freeman the base, the general structure the emigrant negro, the superstructure the hybrid;" finally see Abayomi Karnga, A History of Liberia (Liverpool, 1926), 45. Karnga, then an Associate Justice of Liberia, wrote: "The official classes regarded themselves as patricians, while the masses... were looked upon as plebians ... Society ... became divided into four distinct orders: the official class (including the big traders), the common people, the Congoes and the natives. Social intercourse and marriages amongst these groups were by custom forbidden. Men of light complexion... were preferred to their brothers in ebony. The Republicans (as opposed to party of black men - the Whigs) held that the climate was more severe on the colonists with lighter complexion than on the blacks, and that for this reason the pure blacks should go to the soil for subsistence, whilst his brother with blue veins remain in the Government offices to conduct the affairs of the State."

the social élite. Maintaining the "logic" of the American social system, the mulattoes had considered themselves superior to the blacks, took it for granted that they belonged to the ruling element, and although numerically weak, were able to maintain themselves in power because of their superior economic strength. This division reflected itself in politics, the Whig Party being the party of the blacks, the Republican that of mulattoes. And yet this division was not completely clear cut: exceptional black men were allowed to associate with mulattoes. Well-informed, well-mannered, and public-spirited, Blyden was, from the start of his career in Liberian society, versatile, and himself married in 1856 a mulatto - Sarah Yates, the niece of B. P. Yates, a wealthy merchant who was at that time the Vice-President of Liberia. Blyden was to bitterly repent his choice of a wife. Indeed he became a fanatical opponent of mulattoes because he believed that, although they wielded power, they did nothing to promote the interest of Liberia and that of the Negro race. He came to believe that their very presence there was an insult to the Negro Republic: in 1888 he wrote to a friend, "The appearance of the people of Monrovia is enough to disgust any man who came to Africa with the idea of coming to a Negro Republic".[35]

Perhaps the first sign of his realization that the interests of

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[35]Blyden to Coppinger, 29 June 1888, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 30.

the black and mulatto groups were opposed came in 1857 when his Independence Day Address critical of life in Liberia brought howls of protest from the mulatto element. A year later, latent antagonism between the two groups crystallized around the choice of a site for Liberia College. The College was being made possible through New England philanthropy: in March 1850 the Trustees of Donations for Education in Liberia was incorporated by an Act of the Legislature of Massachusetts, and permitted to hold real estate to the value of one hundred thousand dollars, the income from which was to be used for the promotion of higher education in Liberia.[36] The Boston trustees constituted the ultimate authority of the College, but also associated with it was the New York Colonization Society who set up a special fund for the paying the salary of one Professor and providing a limited number of scholarships to deserving students. In December 1851 the Liberian Legislature passed an Act incorporating the College and appointing a local Board of Trustees, but partly because of disagreement over the site, it was not until January 1858 that the corner-stone was laid. The Hacks, led by Blyden, Crummell and Benson had favoured a site in the interior, which, they argued, would be more healthful and less distracting than on the coast, and would make the College more easily accessible to native students. The mulattoes led by ex-President J. J. Roberts, "an octoroon ... with a very English looking face",[37]

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[36]Gardner W. Allen, The Trustees of Donations for Education in Liberia, A Story of Philanthropic Endeavour, 1850-1923 (Boston, 1923), 1-2.

[37]Johnston, Liberia, 185, fn. 1.

favoured a site in Monrovia. The mulattoes had their wish and to the further disappointment of the blacks, Roberts was appointed by the American Trustees as the first President of the College.

At Liberia College the struggle between the two opposing factions continued; while the President of the College was near-white, the Professors were all black. Joining Blyden and Crummell on the Professorial staff in November 1863 as Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, was thirty-six-year-old Martin H. Freeman, a graduate of Middlebury College, Vermont, and with twelve years of teaching experience.[38] Freeman was extremely race-proud: he had been a close associate of Delany and an executive member of the National Emigration Board.[39] But unlike other American Negro leaders, he did not allow the outbreak of the American Civil War to interfere with his plans for emigration. Blyden had become Secretary of State without relinquishing his position as Professor at the College, and when he began wielding power and influence that was distasteful to Roberts, he forced Blyden to resign his political appointment claiming that it was incompatible with the holding of a Professorship.[40] Yet four months later, when the West Indian emigration scheme was dropped

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[38] African Repository (Nov. 1863), 322.

[39] Delany, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party, 7, 13.

[40] Allen, Education in Liberia, 26.

and no one was found competent to fill the position of Secretary of State, Blyden was again allowed to assume that office.

Another issue causing conflict between the leading blacks and mulattoes was whether or not Liberia should extend its influence over the natives of the interior. In 1856, President Benson despatched the first Liberian expedition into the unexplored interior. It travelled some two hundred and eighty miles inland probably as far as the Mandingo kingdom of Kwaña.[41] But this and other attempts to bring the interior natives into the sphere of Liberian influence was received by mulattoes either with indifference or active opposition. When Benson died in March 1865, Crummell wrote of him to Coppinger: "Poor Benson - he died heart-broken. He declared with great composure that he preferred death to life; he could no longer endure the bitter persecution heaped upon him".[42]

The antagonism between the two groups was at times intense. In March 1864 Crummell wrote to Coppinger that "Never have I in all my life seen such bitterness, hate and malice displayed as has been exhibited by two factions of the state". "Liberia," he reported, was in a "most lamentable condition": there were "political and social distractions" and he feared that "crass despotism" might result.[43] And

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[41]Johnston, Liberia, 238.

[42]Crummell to Coppinger, 5 April 1865, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13.

[43]Crummell to Coppinger, 26 March 1864,.Ibid.

in college matters, Blyden charged that "under the administration of J. J. Roberts ... Negro youth could hardly gain admission but ample provision was made by beneficiary funds for mulattoes, boys and girls".[44] He charged further that mulattoes "hated the very word 'Negro'".[45] Despairing of making any constructive achievements in Liberia because of the opposition of the mulatto group, Blyden thought temporarily in 1865 of leaving the country,[46] but instead tried to get a bill passed in the Liberian legislature modifying the charter of Liberia College in such a way as to give Professors greater protection against a hostile President and Board of Trustees.[47] When this failed to pass, Blyden thought that "there could be no harmony hereafter between Professors and the President of Liberia College", and saw a "crisis ahead".[48]

The crisis was not long in coming. The Board of Trustees of Donation in Boston was understandably unhappy about the disharmony which existed in Liberia College, and at its regular quarterly meeting on 11 July 1866, decided to dismiss Crummell because Roberts had charged

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[44]Blyden to Coppinger, 19 Nov. 1887, A.C.S·Papers, Vol. 29, Pt. 2.

[45]Blyden to Coppinger, 4 July 1866, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13.

[46]Blyden to Crummell, 14 April 1866, John E. Bruce Papers.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Allen, Education in Liberia, 27.

him with being delinquent and intractable.[49] Blyden, too, had been charged with the same offences but because his salary was paid by the New York Colonization Society, the Boston Board could take no action against him. Moreover, he was fortunate that both J.B. Pinney and William Tracy, two influential members of the New York Board, thought well of his ability and character. Indeed, even Roberts was loathe to see Blyden dismissed because he was "unquestionably the best linguist in the country and a good teacher of languages".[50] Appointed to replace Crummell was Hilary W. Johnson, son of the illustrious Liberian pioneer, Elijah Johnson; before long he too was involved in a controversy with Roberts, at the root of which was the Negro-mulatto conflict.[51] Freeman, too, was alarmed by the colour conflict, but seemed to have been less openly rebellious than the other Professors.

While Crummell's fate was being decided, he wrote sadly to Coppinger:

> "I am getting discouraged, and begin to think <u>this</u> is not my home. I was in the hopes that I might remain here and devote my life to the great purposes of education and religion; but such is the constant enmity and opposition of a certain clique here in Monrovia that I begin to feel it my duty to get rid of it... Our College relations are exceedingly uncomfortable. The leading men... don't want us in the country. They do everything they can to degrade us

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[49] Allen, <u>Education in Liberia</u>, 28.

[50] <u>Ibid.</u>

[51] <u>Loc. cit.</u>

> in our pecuniary circumstances... The last attack is a most outrageous one and Professor Blyden and myself have protested against it. Much depends on the action of the "Trustees of Donations" in Boston. If they deem it correct to sanction the immoral conduct of such men, then I must seek some other home: either Sierra Leone or Cape Coast: probably U.S.A."

Although chagrined, Crummell was reluctant to leave:

> "I shall not act rashly ... but it is the saddest of all things to come here to Africa, and find one's black face a disgrace both in his ecclesiastical and social relations with half-caste people. For this, after all, is our difficulty; and has been the difficulty for years."[52]

The dismissal of Crummell was the turning point after which Blyden "fixed himself on the side of truth".[53] He now felt with unshakeable conviction that the greatest single barrier to Liberia's progress was the powerful mulatto group which was unsympathetic to any aspirations of Liberia on behalf of the Negro race.

In this atmosphere of class and colour conflict, Blyden, nonetheless, attempted to carry out conscientiously his duties on behalf of the Republic. As Secretary of State, he was anxious to settle the dispute over Liberia's north-west boundary which had arisen between the Republic and the British Government at Sierra Leone. The dispute began in 1860 after John Myer Harris, an English trader, had

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[52] Crummell to Coppinger, 4 July 1866, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13.

[53] Blyden to Coppinger, 19 May 1879, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 1.

taken advantage of the lack of effective Liberian occupation west of Cape Mount to establish himself between the rivers Sulima and Mano. And when the Liberian authorities sought to assert their jurisdiction over this area, they found that Harris was supported by the British Government at Sierra Leone.[54] On the protest of Liberia, the British Foreign Office pointed to treaties it had entered into with the native chiefs pledging to safeguard their territories from aggressors.[55] The fact was that these treaties were signed in 1862 after the dispute had begun, and were made specifically for the purpose of eradicating the slave trade in that area; it did not invalidate the prior treaty arrangements which had been made between the Liberian Government and the chiefs of the area in the years 1850 to 1856.[56] Yet the Foreign Office, in condescending fashion, advised the Liberian Government to concentrate on developing that part of its territory which was not in dispute, "rather than seeking to extend Liberian jurisdiction over tribes and races who are unwilling to come under Liberian rule", and suggested that if Liberia were "wisely governed and the country civilized and prosperous, the neighbouring people will be glad to be annexed to the Republic".[57]

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[54]For the early stages of the dispute see Johnston, Liberia, 242-45.

[55]Layard to Ralston, 12 Nov. 1863, F.P. 403/7. Confidential Prints. Correspondence Respecting the Boundaries of the Republic of Liberia.

[56]Johnston, Liberia, 241.

[57]Layard to Ralston, 12 Nov. 1863, F.O. 403/7.

Blyden was distressed by the attitude of the Foreign Office. In his first despatch on the subject of the boundary dispute he correctly pointed out that in denying the political sovereignty of Liberia, the native chief had been "influenced by mercenary motives" which had been incited by "unscrupulous foreign traders".[58] He expressed his

> "Deep grief that the oral statements of barbarous and heathen Chiefs on a subject vitally affecting the prosperity of a rising Christian State should be regarded by Her Majesty's Government as entitled to more weight than the statements of Christian men supported by written documents, and by the known loyal conduct of the Chiefs toward the Liberian Government since the cession of their territory until very recently."

He pleaded that unless the British recognized the lawful claims of Liberia,

> "... an interminable series of difficulties would arise: It is impossible not to see that if it should become generally known to the tribes within our borders that Her Majesty's Government sanction the repudiation by native chiefs of claims possessed in their territory by the Liberian Government, it would be a comparatively easy matter... for unprincipled foreigners to induce any number of them by dazzling promises to present complaints to the Foreign Office, denying Liberian jurisdiction."[59]

Blyden also took the opportunity of again urging the British Government to reappoint a Consul in Monrovia so as to facilitate the setting of disputes between Liberia and British subjects.

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[58] Blyden to Ralston, 5 Feb. 1864, enc. in Ralston to Russell, 23 March 1864, F.O. 403/6.

[59] Ibid.

In reply, the Foreign Office "saw no reason to alter its decision", with regard to the Liberian claims;[60] nor did it makeany reference to Blyden's plea for a British consul. Blyden was clearly disappointed and was now prepared to challenge the unjustified inference of the British Foreign Office that Liberia was "influenced by a desire of territorial aggrandisement". He assured the British Government that

> "Such a feeling does not at all enter into the motives of this Government in insisting upon the right to the territories claimed; nor is it actuated by greed of trade. Our relation to the Aborigines is no mere commercial relation, like that generally of the Europeans who reside upon the coast; ours is a fraternal connection. They are our kith and kin; and thus far we have proved that our influence in civilizing them to Christian law, has been fully as successful as the influence of the oldest and most powerful colony in West Africa".[61]

It is characteristic of Blyden that although Liberia's claim was legally strong, he sought to win the sympathy of the British Government by impressing upon it his conception of Liberia's role in Africa and on behalf of the Negro:

> "Liberia is the only portion of Africa which her civilized descendants returning from a painful exile of centuries occupy; the only spot on this vast continent ... where any portionof the race can be said to hold an intelligent rule. To this bright spot thoughtful Africans everywhere are looking with the deepest interest. We may reasonably expect that after the war in the United States there will be an immigration of large numbers of blacks from the Western hemisphere, and it would be sad that this mere speck on the Continent of our fathers, should be circumscribed, and that too, after we have exerted ourselves to enlarge

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[60] Layard to Ralston, 2 June 1864, F.O. 403/7.

[61] Blyden to Ralston, 5 Aug. 1864, Enc. in Ralston to Russell, 4 Oct. 1864, F.O. 403/6.

> our borders by fair purchase and honourable treaty stipulations, prepatory to the influx of our worn-out and down-trodden brethren from abroad."[62]

But despite Blyden's anxiety to get the boundary dispute settled, no constructive steps were taken towards doing so during his twenty months as Secretary of State.

If he had undertaken to settle some of Liberia's external problems, he remained concerned about a remedy for her internal ones. It is significant that as Secretary of State he chose to deliver the annual address commemorating Liberia's independence. His subject, "Our Origin, Dangers and Duties", is typical, his exhortation characteristic:

> "We must, as a holy and solemn duty, labour to benefit our country... We must cultivate pride of race ... Our antecedent often exert a most depressing influence upon us. But we must endeavour to shake off the influence of the past. We must have faith in the Negro race...
>
> We are engaged here on this coast in a great and noble work. We cannot easily exaggerate the magnitude of the interest involved in the enterprise to which we are committed. Not only the highest welfare of the few thousands; but the character of a whole race is implicated in what we are doing... We are more eagerly watched than we have any idea of."[63]

In the same address Blyden showed that he was well acquainted with and influenced by the spirit of nationalism which then prevailed in Europe and the Americas, and was proving an incentive to constructive action:

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[62]Blyden to Ralston, 5 Aug. 1864, Enc. in Ralston to Russell, 4 Oct. 1864, F.O. 403/6.

[63]Edward W. Blyden, Our Origins, Dangers and Duties (New York, 1865), 36.

> "The tendency among nations seems to be to group themselves according to natural affinities of sentiment and race. Witness the struggle in Italy - the dreams of Mazzini and Garibaldi with reference to the unification of that country. Germany is striving for consolidation. The same principle is at work in Hungary, and the visions of Kossuth may be realized. Even Poland is feeling for the same thing... In the western world, Mexico and Santo Domingo are determined to assert and protect this unity and freedom. The tendency in that direction is seen everywhere."[64]

He was anxious that this spirit should not pass the Negro by.

Blyden continued to regard as one of Liberia's major drawbacks widespread immorality, not least among the ruling class. His constant moralising had not been efficacious. In 1864 Crummell reported to Coppinger that "our moral condition is dreadful - lust, adultery, divorce, drunkenness rage here among our highest, most prominent citizens..."[65] The evil was due in part to a "wretchedly ignorant" population, "illiterate school masters", and an "untrained ministry". Crummell felt that "the two great needs of Liberia were the education of women and a reformed ministry".[66] He suggested that the American Colonization Society and missionary agencies should concentrate first on educating emigrants rather than native Africans; in turn, a community of well-trained and disciplined emigrants would influence the natives for good.

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[64]Blyden, Our Origins, Dangers and Duties, 40.

[65]Crummell to Coppinger, 26 March 1865, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 13.

[66]Crummell to Coppinger, 5 May 1864, Ibid.

Blyden shared Crummell's sentiments in all this. He was of the opinion that an enlightened ministry could be a powerful agency in preparing Liberia for its pan-Negro role. In a brilliant sermon preached on the occasion of the installation of a young Presbyterian as a minister, Blyden demanded of Liberian clergymen qualifications which would be unusually high even in more civilized communities. Besides being "spiritually enlightened", Blyden would have them "intellectually, the ... equal if not the superior to the most enlightened of his congregation"; at all times must they be the best informed men of their communities. The Liberian clergyman must be a scholar "who would not be content to take at second hand the views of the meaning of passages; but he should be able to repair to the fountain head". He noted that in both England and America many of the names eminent in literature and science were those of clergymen; and that they influenced to a great extent "the thought and tendency of their age". He thought idealistically that it ought also to be so in Liberia:

> "The ministers must apply themselves so as to train the thought of the nation. So intimate is the alliance between the religious character and political interests of a nature, that no country can make much progress in the latter, where those who are to mould the former are inferior men."[67]

Again, Blyden's pastor would be the most patriotic and civic-minded of men: he would enjoin these precepts on him:

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[67]Edward W. Blyden, The Pastor's Work... (London, 1866), 14.

> "He should never forget his duties and privileges as a citizen. He should labour ... for the upbuilding of his country.... In all countries there is always going on a struggle between the state of things as it is, and the state of things as it is to be, or should be. The struggle is going on in Liberia; and in this conflict the pastor should be able to guide his people aright. He should constantly inculcate the duty of choosing wise and righteous rulers.... He should always be in sympathy with the better social and political movements of the times, though not subservient to them. While he should stand forth as a Reformer, he should not allow himself to serve by his sermons any party or administration, nor suffer himself to become an advocate or a tool for any political sect. He should carefully avoid all cliqueship, even in the best cause, as tending to fossilize opinions, to foster prejudice more than encourage truth. But he must conscientiously preach his own views of such reforms in social and political relations as he may deem necessary, not as a mere idealist, but as a practical being always trying to plant his foot upon the real and the true."[68]

Finally, Blyden would have his pastors personally supervise the instruction of the young in their congregations, for he felt that in Liberia more than in any other country, future success depended upon the proper training of youth.

But Blyden and Crummell were not content merely to exhort and denounce; wherever possible, they attempted to be constructive. In 1864 they founded in Monrovia an Athenaeum where the young men could meet and through lectures, debates and discussions, become better informed, acquire elements of culture and, on the whole, better prepare themselves for the roles they were expected to play in Liberia. The two Negro patriots hoped that the Athenaeum would be "one of the grand

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[68]Edward W. Blyden, The Pastor's Work... (London, 1866), 15.

means of moral reformation among our youth".[69]

In order to foster communication between Liberia and the Mohammedan interior, Blyden had decided to learn Arabic and to teach it to young men at Liberia College. He was all the more anxious that Liberia should have frequent intercourse with and perhaps eventually incorporate the Mohammedan states in the interior because he was much impressed with the dignified bearing, sobriety, sense of purpose, and pride of race found among Mohammedan Negroes, all of which qualities, so he contended with a great deal of truth, were largely absent from Christian Negroes on the coast. He recognized, too, that Islam was a unifying force among African tribes and thus saw it as an important pan-Negro agency. Thus, on 11 May 1866, five days after he had delivered his sermon on the precepts for pastors, Blyden left Liberia for Lebanon, Syria, there to continue the study of Arabic which he had started on his own.

Blyden travelled to Syria via England, Gibraltar, Malta and Egypt. In Egypt he made another of those gestures which bespoke his pathological concern that Liberia should succeed, and his anxiety that it might not: at the entrance to the pyramids, he engraved the word "Liberia" with his name and the date 11 July 1866, immediately under it; he had done this to ensure "that the name at least of that

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[69]Crummell to Coppinger, 5 Sept. 1864, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 13.

Republic will go down to posterity".[70] Undoubtedly, it was his search for distinguished Negro achievement in the earliest times which induced Blyden to visit Egypt. His observations here together with his own readings convinced him that Negroes must have played an important part in the early civilization of that country. Blyden's own words tell vividly of the stirring emotions which this visit aroused in him:

> "While standing in the central hall of the pyramid, I thought of the lines of (Hilary) Teage, the Liberian poet, when urging his countrymen to noble deeds - 'From pyramids hall/ From Karnac's sculptured wall/ From Thebes they loudly call/ Retake your fame'. This, thought I, was the work of my African progenitors, Teage was right; they had fame, and their descendants should strive, by nobler deeds, to 'retake' it. Feelings came over me far different from those I have ever felt when looking at the mighty works of European genius. I felt that I had a peculiar 'heritage in the Great Pyramid' built... by the enterprising sons of Ham, from whom I descended. The blood seemed to flow faster through my veins. I seemed to hear the echo of those illustrious Africans. I seemed to feel the impulse from those stirring characters who sent civilization to Greece.... I felt lifted out of the commonplace grandeur of modern times; and, could my voice have reached every African in the world, I would have earnestly addressed him in the language of Hilary Teage: 'Retake your fame'."[71]

And if "Negroes had been prominent in those early days in the organization of government", even so, Blyden extrapolated, they must have "an important part to play in the closing of the great drama".

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[70] Blyden, From West Africa to Palestine, 112.

[71] Ibid., 105-106.

So inspired was he by the sights of Egypt that he longed to present to the world his conclusions about early Negro history there; but he wished to document this as carefully as possible before doing so.[72] The result of all his findings was the publication of an article entitled "The Negro in Ancient History" in the first issue for 1869 of the Methodist Quarterly Review,[73] whose editor, Daniel D. Whedon, was a controversial clergyman, and a former University Professor of Classical languages and literature.[74] Significantly, Blyden's article was the first by a Negro to appear in a literary quarterly,[75] and was also the most serious attempt yet made by a member of the race to recreate aspects of the earliest Negro history.[76] It combined accomplished scholarship with skilful propaganda, and altogether was an ingenious refutation of the charge of a large portion of the dominant white world as expressed by Commander Foote that

> "if all the negroes of all generations have ever done were to be obliterated from recollection forever, the whole world would lose no great truth, no profitable arts, no exemplary form of life. The loss of all that is African would offer no memorable deduction from anything but the black catalogue of crime."[77]

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[72]Blyden to Gladstone, 13 Apr. 1867, British Museum Add. Mss. 44412/207.

[73]Edward W. Blyden, "The Negro in Ancient History", The Methodist Quarterly Review, LI (Jan. 1869), 71-93.

[74]Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XX, 43-44.

[75]See Edward W. Blyden, "The Negro in Ancient History," The People of Africa... (New York, 1871), 1, fn. 1.

(cont.)

His refutation showed that he was fully familiar with the literature containing arguments for and against Negro participation in early Egyptian history. For positive proof that Negroes played an important part in the early history of Egypt, Blyden depended mainly on biblical evidence. Agreeing with Sir Henry Rawlinson,[78] the noted British ethnographer, that Chapter Ten of Genesis was "undoubtedly the most authentic record... for the affiliation of those branches of the human race which sprang from the triple stock of the Noachidae", Blyden returned to the original Hebrew to offer elaborate proof that Negroes - sons of Ham - participated "most actively in those ancient works of arts and science"; and, for those who would still claim that these "enterprising sons of Ham" were non-Negroid, he adduced evidence from Herodotus and Homer as well as from comparative philology to prove it could not have been otherwise.[79]

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[76](cont.)
Some earlier but mainly propagandist attempts were: Hosea Easton, A Treatise on the Intellectual Character, and the Civil and Political Conditions of the Colored People of the United States (New York, 1837); R. B. Lewis, Light and Truth; Collected from the Bible and Ancient and Modern History of the Colored ... Race (Boston, 1844); and Henry Highland Garnet, The Past and Present Condition, and the Destiny of the Colored Race (New York, 1848).

[77]Quoted in Blyden, "The Negro in Ancient History", The Methodist Quarterly Review, 71; see also A. H. Foote, Africa and the American Flag (New York, 1854), 207.

[78]Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XVI, 771-774.

[79]Blyden, "The Negro in Ancient History", Methodist Quarterly Review, 81-84; cf. Basil Davidson, Old Africa Rediscovered (London, 1959), 28, where he writes: "An analysis of some eight hundred skulls from predynastic Egypt ... shows that at least a third of them were Negroes... and this may well support the view, to which a study of language also brings some confirma-

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Contrary to popular opinion, then, the civilized world owed a great debt to Negroes as active and important participators in the world's first great civilization - which had passed on to posterity "the germs of all the arts and science!" Blyden believed that he had adduced sufficient evidence in his article for a convincing refutation of Commander Foote's charges and clinched his argument thus:

> "Now are we to believe that such a people have been by the terms of any curse, to be the 'servant of servants' as some upholders of Negro slavery have thought? Would it not have been a singular theory that a people destined to servitude, should begin, the very first thing.... to found 'great cities', organize kingdoms, and establish rule - putting up structures which come down to this day as a witness to their superiority over all their contemporaries.... Are these a people, with such remarkable antecedents and in the whole of whose history the hand of God is so plainly seen, to betreated with the contempt which they usually suffer in bondage?"[80]

In his article Blyden also developed the reasonable argument that African tribes "live in a condition not very different from that of the great portion of Europe in the Middle Ages"; were it not for the slave trade, and had peaceful intercourse been maintained between Europe and Africa, it was likely that the latter would be closer to the former in achievement.

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79 (cont.)
tion, that remote ancestors of Africans today were an importand and perhaps dominant element among populations which fathered the civilisation of ancient Egypt". For evidence of Negro habitation of the Sahara as early as the Neolithic Age and of their artistic achievements there, see the work of the French archaeologist, Henri Lhote, The Search for the Tassili Frescoes, (London, 1959).

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[80] Blyden, "The Negro in Ancient History", Methodist Quarterly Review, op.cit. 93.

From Egypt Blyden had gone on to Mt. Lebanon, Syria, where, characteristically, he consciously regarded himself as Liberia's ambassador. He was the first Liberian to visit Mt. Lebanon, but the fact that he was the only one there did not deter him from arranging for the celebration of the anniversary of Liberia's independence, all of which was done in a week's time. He had to tell American missionaries and citizens in Mt. Lebanon of "Liberia: Past, Present and Future". As usual, his picture of Liberia for foreigners represented more what he wished it to be than what it really was:

> "Most wonderful have been the changes which, within a few years, the moral and religious aspects of that portion of Africa have undergone. Where, a few years ago stood virgin forests or impenetrable jungles, we now behold churches erected to the living God; we hear the sound of the church-going bells, and regular Sabbath ministrations are enjoyed. If you could see Liberia as she now is with her six hundred miles of coast snatched from the abomination of the slave-trade, her thriving towns and villages, her spacious streets and fine houses, her happy homes with their varied delights, her churches and Sabbath schools and their solemn and delightful services; could you contemplate all the diversified means of improvement and enjoyment and indication on every hand of ease and happiness and plodding industry of her population without those feverish and distracting pursuits and rivalries which make large cities so unpleasant; could you behold these things and contrast the state of things now with what it was forty years ago, when eight-eight pilgrims first landed on these shores, where the primeval forests stood around them with their awful unbroken solitudes; could you listen as they listened to the rush of the wind through these forests to the roar of the wild beast and the savage music of treacherous foes all around them; were you ... in a position to make this contrast, you would exclaim what God hath wrought! You would acknowledge that the spirit of Christianity and civilization has moved upon the face of

> these turbid waters, and that beauty and order have emerged out of material rude and unpromising; you would recognize on that coast a germ of moral renovation which shall at length burst into glorious efflorescence all over the land; the wilderness and the desert shall bloom and blossom as a rose."[81]

On his return to Liberia after three months in the Middle East including a visit to Jerusalem, Blyden introduced the study of Arabic into Liberia College even though President Roberts "did all he could to discourage it".[82] He continued to turn his thoughts to opening up the interior. He was instrumental in persuading two New Yorkers, Henry M. Schieffelin and Caleb Swan, to finance an expedition into the interior under the Liberian explorer, Benjamin Anderson.[83] Anderson's expedition which set out on 14 February 1868 and occupied thirteen months, was one of major significance in the exploration of West Africa.[84] It took him through the forest belt across a country of parkland into one of open grass land as far as the Mohammedan kingdom of Musardu. Anderson had made treaties of friendship and alliance with several of the Mandingo chiefs, including the King of Musardu.[85] In

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[81]Edward W. Blyden, Liberia: Past, Present and Future (Washington, 1869), 13.

[82]Blyden to Coppinger, July 1879, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 1.

[83]Benjamin Anderson, Narrative of a Journey to Musardu, the capital of the Western Mandingoes (New York, 1870), 5.

[84]Johnston, op.cit., 252.

[85]Anderson, op.cit., see Appendix.

1869 Blyden himself began preparatory work for a "manual-labour school" at V onswah, a Mohammedan town in the interior of Liberia, after he had received an offer of five hundred pounds from Robert Arthington, a cotton manufacturer of Leeds, England for that purpose.[86] But before he could start effective work in the interior he was forced to flee Liberia.

Events leading up to Blyden's forcible departure from Liberia can be traced from the accession to the presidency in 1870 of Edward James Roye, "a pure descendant of the Ibo tribe",[87] who had won the presidency from its incumbent, James Sprigg Payne, a mulatto, after one of the most fiercly contested election in Liberian history.[88] An American College graduate, Roye had emigrated to Liberia in 1846 and, as a shred trader and shipowner, had become one of the wealthiest men in Liberia. In his public career he had been a journalist, a member of the Liberian House of Representative, and government official in several capacities, including that of Chief Justice from 1865 to 1868. Blyden was optimistic that Roye's presidency would greatly benefit Liberia: they had both been close friends, both were resentful of mulatto influence, and believed that Liberia's future lay in

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[86] Blyden to Coppinger, 4 Oct. 1872, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 16, Pt. 1. American Colonization Society, Annual Report, Washington 1869, p.7.

[87] For a biographical sketch of Roye, see The American Colonization Society, Fifty-Fourth Annual Report (Washington, 1871), 181; also Charles Huberich, The Political and Legislative History of Liberia (New York, 1947), 1258.

[88] Blyden to the Committee of the Republican Party, Feb. 1887, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 1.

fully incorporating the native element. The programme which Roye outlined in his inaugural address was an ambitious and comprehensive one: it included "a thorough financial reconstruction and the establishment of a national banking system, the general education of the masses, the introduction of railroads, and the improvement and incorporation of the native tribes contiguous to Liberia, and the formation of a friendly alliance with distant and powerful tribes".[89] Roye intended to pay special attention to education: he sought to establish a "practical commonschool system" throughout the country and early in his presidency set up a committee of education to inaugurate and direct this comprehensive education scheme. Blyden was closely identified with these grandiose schemes for Liberia.

To finance such an ambitious programme, and "to redeem the currency of the country, and thus furnish the people with a circulating medium which they have not had for years",[90] Roye decided to negotiate for a British loan and received the consent of the Liberian Legislature. A loan of one hundred thousand pounds was finally arranged in the summer of 1871 through David Chinery, the Consul-General for Liberia in Britain and a man of dubious honesty,[91] assisted by

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[89] Quoted in Fifty-Fourth Annual Report of American Colonization Society, 21.

[90] Quoted in J. M. Turner, U. S. Minister to Liberia, to Hamilton Fish, U.S. Secretary of State, 30 Oct. 1871, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (Washington, 1873), 325.

[91] Raymond Leslie Buell, The Native Problem in Africa (New York, 1928), Vol. II, 796.

two Liberian commissioners, J. S. Anderson and W. H. Johnson. Despite the offer of future custom receipts as security the loan could only be obtained on "unconscionable" terms:[92] thirty thousand pounds as discount and advance interest was retained by the bankers; and the entire loan was to be repaid in fifteen years at seven per cent interest. Roye himself, who had gone to England in an attempt to settle the long disputed boundary dispute, did not take part in the negotiations but sanctioned the terms of the loan. In doing so Roye made himself very vulnerable to the attacks of his political opponents who were strenuously opposed to the loan and particularly to the high interest to be paid on it.

The two factions disagreed violently, too, on whether the length of Roye's term of office was two or four years. In 1864 Blyden and his associates had sought to effect an amendment to the constitution which would, among other reforms, extend the term of the Presidency to four years, but this attempt was unsuccessful.[93] But in 1869 the Liberian Legislature agreed to have another proposal to amend the Constitution put to the vote at the same time as the presidential election. This seemed to have been a manoeuvre on the part of the mulattoes to keep Payne in office for an extended period;[94]

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[92]Huberich, Liberia, Vol. 11, 1134.

[93]Johnston, Liberia, 218.

[94]Turner to Fish, 30 Oct. 1871, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 324.

but although the overwhelming majority in a small poll voted for the amendment to the Constitution, it was Roye and not Payne who won the presidential contest. The mulatto-dominated Liberian Senate refused to sanction the amendment, but agreed to have the proposal resubmitted to the electorate and in May 1870, a special election was held. The vote again favoured an amendment but the mulatto forces used every ruse to prevent final legislative sanction.[95] Thus thwarted, Roye issued a Proclamation in November 1870 declaring the Constitution amended to prolong the presidential term to four years, the senatorial term from four to eight years, and the term of the members of the House of Representatives from two to four years. But Roye's opponents firmly maintained that the Constitution had not been amended. The controversy developed into a minor crisis. A correspondent of the African Times in a letter from Monrovia in December 1870 wrote: "Matters stand in a very serious condition here. The country is in a great uproar.... Every man seems to have law in his hand".[96]

The situation was to worsen. J. J. Roberts returned to active political life and declared himself a presidential candidate for election in May 1871. Roye, who clung to the view that his was a four year term, issued a proclamation forbidding the holding of elections

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[95] Turner to Fish, 30 Oct. 1871, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 324; also Huberich, Liberia, 1137.

[96] African Times, X (23 June 1871).

at that time. But undaunted, Roberts got himself "elected" and left shortly thereafter to spend the summer in England. On 22 October Roberts returned to a demonstrative welcome. On that same evening violence broke out in Monrovia: cannon shots were fired into Roye's home.[97] In the following days there were skirmishes between the two factions; Roye's followers were overpowered and he himself caught and imprisoned. On 26 October the Senate and the House of Representatives met, and, in "extra-legal"[98] action, declared Roye deposed. Before he could be tried, Roye escaped from prison and was killed.[99] While the struggle lasted there had

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[97] According to the U. S. Minister to Liberia (see Turner to Fish, 30 Oct. 1871, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States) it was the Roberts faction which started the violence. However, Winwood Reade (African Sketch-Book, 249), who was not in Liberia at the time and must have received a partisan account, tells the implausible story that "Mr. Roye made war on the town, and, going into the street flung hand grenades in every direction. The people, in return, loaded a canon and fired a ball into his mansion." Johnston, (Liberia, 261), and after him other writers on Liberian history repeated the story.

[98] Huberich, Liberia, 1134.

[99] The usual story is that Roye - with a bag of money - part of the loan - tied about his body was drowned while attempting to board an English steamer. Again Winwood Reade (African Sketch-Book, 250), seems to have been the source of this story. Blyden gives a different account. He claimed that when Roye "escaped from prison and was waiting for a boat a mulatto shot him and then published he got drowned": Blyden to Coppinger, 22 Oct. 1887, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 2. Without further evidence one cannot say that Blyden's version is the correct one but it might be questioned whether in fact Roye escaped with part of the loan: (a) it would seem a physical impossibility to swim any distance carrying a bag of specie; (b) on his deposition the loan would come under the control of the new Government and any part of it found in his possession would be seized; (c) it is unlikely that he could have kept any part of the loan in prison with him. Yet his attempt to escape still makes sense: he was a man with assets in British banks.

been several political murders and chaos continued even after Roye's deposition. In a letter of 6 November 1871, H. W. Erskine, the Superintendent of the Presbyterian Mission in Liberia wrote:

> "We are in a state of anarchy and confusion out here - one hardly knows when he lies down at night whether he will not be murdered before morning. Thousands would gladly return to America if they had the means to do so. Military arrests are the usual sights nowadays. Men are arrested and imprisoned for no other cause than that they differ from the dominant party who deposed President Roye..."[100]

It is ironic that the man who conceived the most grandiose plans for the development of Liberia should have occasioned the Republic one of its greatest setbacks: the inability to repay the Roye loan and its accumulated interests was to be for long a serious embarrassment to the Negro state. And yet, indubitably, the beginning of the Roye administration had created a new, hopeful and expansive mood among his followers. Much later Blyden was to comment: "I am refreshed when I look back to that year and feel its impulse."[101] It was symptomatic of the new mood that, shortly after Roye's inauguration as President, Blyden himself undertook a mission of friendship to King Marmora of Boporo. With the consent of the Mohammedan king, Blyden opened a school and left a Liberian teacher in charge. This he had regarded as a first step in a new effort by Liberia to extend its influence interiorwards.[102]

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[100] H. W. Erskine to J. C. Lowrie, 6 Nov. 1871, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 9.

[101] Blyden to Coppinger, 28 April 1888, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 25, Pt. 1.

[102] The Peoples of Africa, 103; also Reade (who accompanied Blyden), African Sketch-Book, 253.

Ironically, too, Roye himself was partly responsible for Blyden's flight from the Negro Republic five months before he (Roye) was deposed. One of the reasons why Blyden had held Roye in high esteem was that he was one of the very few successful black men who had taken a Negro woman as wife. Indeed, Blyden claimed that Mrs. Roye was the first black (as opposed to mulatto) woman to occupy the presidential mansion.[103] Understandably, Blyden was much friendlier to her than he had been to any of her predecessors. But this gave his opponents the pretext of charging that he had committed adultery with Roye's wife.[104] At this time Blyden was more unpopular than ever with the mulattoes because he had made uncomplimentary references to them in an article of his on "Mixed Races in Liberia",[105] which had been published in the United States and copies of which had found their way back to Liberia. By the use of statistics Blyden had proved that although mulattoes occupied privileged positions in Liberia, the death rate among them was significantly higher than among Negro emigrants.[106] Money was spent on educating mulatto instead of Negro

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[103] Blyden to Coppinger, 29 June 1888, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 25.

[104] Blyden was later declared innocent of the charge of adultery by the Presbytery of West Africa who investigated it: Blyden to Coppinger, 7 Jan. 1873, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 16, Pt. 1.

[105] Edward W. Blyden, "Mixed Races in Liberia", Smithsonian Institute Annual Report (Washington, 1870), 386-388. Blyden's information was not really intended for publication: it took the form of a letter addressed to a member of the Board of the New York Colonization Society.

[106] cf. Johnston, Liberia, 275.

students and this was wasted as many of the mulattoes died young. Decadent mulattoes in important positions, Blyden claimed with some truth, "account in part for our want of enterprize and progress here". Under the guise of moral outrage at his alleged adultery with Mrs. Roye, and apparently with the connivance of Roye who seemed to have thought that he could use Blyden as a scapegoat to lessen mulatto opposition to him, a mulatto-incited mob of "forty poverty-stricken and ignorant blacks" dragged him through the streets with a rope around his neck and would have lynched him but for the timely intervention of his influential friend, D. B. Warner.[107] Rescued, Blyden fled to Sierra Leone.

For Blyden the deposition and death of Roye and his own forcible departure from Liberia were signal triumphs for the mulattoes and a great blow to the Negro Republic. Of his stay in Liberia he summed up thus:

> "... I have striven by night and day for the advancement of the people and the country. I gave myself no leisure or repose. It was with me a passion as well as a principle to labour for the upbuilding of Liberia."[108]

But despite his efforts and wishes, Liberia had remained unpromising: lack of significant emigration, lack of money for economic development, widespread illiteracy, and the virulent conflict between Negroes and

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[107] Blyden to Col. J. C. Hemphill, 3 July 1909, Hemphill Papers, also Blyden to Coppinger, 2 Aug. 1871, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 204.

[108] Ibid.

mulattoes had all militated against its success. But for all its disabilities, it remained the focus of Blyden's pan-Negro thinking, and he was to return to it after a sojourn away.

Chapter Three

BLYDEN, AND CULTURAL ETHNO-CENTRISM IN SIERRA LEONE, 1871-1874

Driven from Liberia, Blyden continued his work on behalf of Africa and the Negro race in Sierra Leone. For his task, as he conceived it, Sierra Leone was, after Liberia, the logical choice of venue. Sierra Leone, like Liberia, had been an experiment in culture contact: its founders had optimistically conceived it as a centre from which Christianity and western culture would radiate. The colony had early received the attention of both the Church Missionary Society (1804) and the Wesleyan Missionary Society (1811), and mainly through their efforts western education became firmly established. Education of an elementary nature was available in the colony almost from its inception. In 1818 the C.M.S. set up the "Christian Institution" for the training of teachers and catechists, and this was constituted into a regular training College of Fourah Bay in 1827. In 1843 the Wesleyans, too, started a regular training College at King Tom's Point. From 1845 secondary education was provided at a C.M.S. Grammar School. Thus, Sierra Leone was able to provide missionaries, teachers, catechists, clerks and junior civil servants to other parts of West Africa. This, together with the links established by liberated Africans returning to their homeland or trading along the coast had made Sierra Leone the centre

of an emerging West African community. Sierra Leone itself attracted West Indian artisans and professionals, a few of whom attained the highest positions, including that of Governor, and Chief Justice.[1] West Indians, too, were the pioneers of journalism in Sierra Leone.[2] In 1855, William Drape started the first privately-owned newspaper, The New Era, which directed its attack against the "old era" - the "Dictatorial" Crown Colony system. Between 1855 and Blyden's arrival in the colony seven newspapers had been published and this largely West-Indian controlled press had heralded an incipient nationalism in their attacks on government abuses and their call for African political representation, but had also fostered sectionalism in their scurrilous abuse of individual Africans or particular elements in the society. For in Sierra Leone as in Liberia there were stratified divisions and often mutual animosity among the various sections of the population: Creoles, liberated Africans and native Africans of various tribes, and Muslim Negroes. Sierra Leone also suffered the disadvantage of political immaturity: although Negroes had served on both the Executive and Legislative Council, they had been the nominees either of

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[1] Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, passim: in 1844, William Fergusson, a former Army Staff Surgeon on the West African Coast, was appointed Governor, having acted twice before in that capacity. John Carr, Robert Dougan, and Alexander Fitzjames, all lawyers, acted as Governor, respectively, in 1842, 1855, and 1859. In 1841 John Carr was appointed Chief Justice, a position he held for more than twenty years.

[2] C. H. Fyfe, "The Sierra Leone Press in the Nineteenth Century", Sierra Leone Studies, New Series, No. 8 (June 1957), 229-231.

the British Government or the Governor: as yet there was no semblance of democratic government even at the local level.

If Blyden believed that he could work most effectively for the Negro race through Liberia he was, nonetheless, content to work temporarily through Sierra Leone. During an initial stay here of a little more than two years he inspired among a small group of educated Africans an ethnocentric movement which was characterised by a revolt against attempts at Europeanization of Africans, by emphasis on racial difference and the need for developing the special attributes of the Negro race and of maintaining a distinctive African culture. And yet this was not an anti-European movement. Indeed Blyden's pan-Negro programme required the extension of British power and influence in Africa as a pacifying and unifying force. But he insisted that Africans should progressively take the lead in directing their own affairs.

The immediate background to this manifestation of cultural ethnocentrism was the tension which had existed between the native pastors and European missionaries of the Church Missionary Society over the control and management of the native pastorate and the rampant sectarian rivalry in the colony. Under the stimulus of Blyden this tension erupted into an open controversy and assumed a wider significance when other lay natives joined the issue on the side of native pastors. Both native clerics and laymen saw as their chief opponents European missionaries who, so they charged, through a fierce

sectarianism but common contempt for African customs and institutions were doing grave harm to Africans by creating new divisions among them and by destroying the wholesome base of African society. They argued that reform was necessary and was to be brought about through the agencies of an independent African church, of which they saw the native pastorate of the C.M.S. as a nucleus, and a University, preferably secular, run by educated Negroes themselves. Though the movement was primarily cultural, its objective was ultimately political and pan-Negro.

To understand why Blyden's influence was able to trigger off such a movement we must attempt to discover its deeper roots. These lay, to a large extent, with decisions taken in England: the first was in the forward-looking plan of Henry Venn,[3] the honorary secretary of the C.M.S. from 1841 until his death in 1873, for the creation of "self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating native churches"; the other in the Report of the Select Parliamentary Committee of 1865 which recommended that future British policy in West Africa should be directed towards "encouraging in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible for us more and more to trans-

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[3] See Venn's four papers, three on "The Native Pastorate and Organization of Native Churches", the other "On Nationality", William Knight, Memoir of Rev. H. Venn (London 1880), 305-21, and 282-92 respectively; also J. F. A. Ajayi, "Henry Venn and the Policy of Development", Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, No. 4 (1959), 331-42.

fer to them the administration of all the Governments..."[4] Under Venn's plan, C.M.S. missionaries were to found nuclei of Christian communities, provide them with native leadership, and then withdraw to repeat the process elsewhere, while continuing to exercise a moral influence ab extra. To carry out this delicate and difficult task Venn gave "practical instructions" to his missionaries, the salient ones of which are worth noting: they were "to study the national character of the people" among whom they worked and "show the utmost respect for national peculiarities"; Venn assumed that there were "irrepressible race distinctions", and warned missionaries that "these would rise in intensity with the progress of the mission", but they were not to react "by charging the natives with presumption and ingratitude" or by standing upon their "British prestige"; they were to expect that "as the native church assumes a national character it will supersede the denominational distinctions which are now introduced by Foreign Missionaries".[5] This wise and progressive policy of Venn did not find favour with European missionaries, and in Sierra Leone, as elsewhere, missionary work fell far short of what he had recommended. But Venn himself had provided native peoples with the grounds for criticizing European missionary short-comings and had set them the unequivocal goal of a "national" independent church. On All Saints' Day

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[4]Report of Select Committee on West Africa, Parliamentary Papers (1865), 3.

[5]Knight, Memoir of Venn, 282-87.

a Native Church Pastorate was formed with nine pastors in charge of as many parishes, but contrary to Venn's recommended policy remained under direct European supervision: it was left to the initiative of enlightened Africans to attempt to bring to pass Venn's goal of an independent African Church which they had adopted as their own. And it is significant that at the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Native Church Pastorate on 31 May 1871, J. H. Davies, one of the native pastors, dealt on the indispensableness of an independent native church in Sierra Leone:

> "We are pleading for an institution ... which alone can bring true liberty to the soul and body of man ... We request you to aim at establishing at Sierra Leone a pure Native Church ... not only for our own and children's use, but for the use of Africa at large."[6]

In like manner the recommendations of the 1865 Parliamentary Committee had tended to encourage greater African assertion in their own affairs. It is true that the Committee recommended the retention of Sierra Leone, but it was needed only as a centre for Britain's philanthropic endeavour in West Africa, primarily for the suppression of the slave trade: it was thus intended that in Sierra Leone too, the task of preparing the natives for the management of their own affairs was to be undertaken. And although the British Government did not find it convenient to implement this recommendation, it affected the thinking

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[6] C.M.S. CA1/09, Tenth Annual Report of the Sierra Leone Native Pastorate.

of colonial governors for at least a decade and of native Africans for a much longer period. During his second governorship of Sierra Leone (1868-1872) Sir Arthur E. Kennedy sought to implement this policy by appointing to Government positions qualified Africans, whenever they were available, in preference to Europeans. In this way, the number of Africans in the service of the Government was significantly increased.[7] Among these new appointments was that of the Rev. George Nicol to the colonial chaplaincy of the Gambia - the first African to be appointed to such a position. In a letter of gratitude to Kennedy, the native pastors of Sierra Leone saw the appointment "as an era in the history of West Africa", and hoped that it heralded "a happier day ... when the prejudices of race will end".[8] In addition, Kennedy had increased African representation on the Legislative Council from one to two, and shortly before his governorship ended, prompted, with success, educated natives to form a Sierra Leone Native Association to promote African interest. For their part, the educated natives of West Africa had immediately endorsed the recommendations of the 1865 Parliamentary Committee. One of the first and most articulate endorsements came from James Africanus Horton, a Sierra Leonean medical doctor trained at the University of Edinburgh. Horton described the recommenda-

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[7] African Times, X (21 May 1871).

[8] Native Pastors to Sir A. E. Kennedy, Nov. 1869, quoted in J.A.B. Horton, Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast (London, 1870), 164-65.

tions as "a grand conception", and looked forward to the time when "West African nationalities will occupy a prominent place in the world's history, and when they will command a voice in the councils of nations".[9]

This is the background to Blyden's attempt at fostering cultural ethno-centrism in Sierra Leone. On leaving Liberia he had gone straight to Sierra Leone and after a few weeks here left for England. In England he had been interviewed by the C.M.S. Committee and appointed to the Sierra Leone mission as a linguist. The members of the Committee, and especially Henry Venn, had been highly impressed by Blyden's ability and regarded him as a key figure in the contemplated attempts of the Society to push its work into the interior.[10] But Blyden's mere presence in Sierra Leone brought about a deterioration in the relationship between European missionaries of the C.M.S. and the native pastors. Henry Cheetham, the dynamic new bishop of Sierra Leone, a man with a low opinion of native African ability,[11] and with no patience for the "pretensions" of native pastors towards ecclesiastical independence, was strongly opposed to

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[9] J.A.B.Horton, West African Countries and Peoples.... (London, 1868), 68-69.

[10] C.M.S. CA1/L8, Secs. of the C.M.S. to Blyden, 1 Aug. 1871; Venn to Messrs. Hamilton and Lamb, 4 Aug. 1871.

[11] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Cheetham to Venn, 5 Feb. 1872. In comparing the ability of Englishmen to natives, the Bishop put the ratio at "100 to 3".

Blyden's appointment, partly because the Negro scholar was already known to have been adversely critical of Christian missions in Africa, while lauding the influence of Islam,[12] partly because rumour had reached Sierra Leone from Liberia that Blyden had committed adultery with Roye's wife and had been forced to flee the Negro Republic.[13] On the other hand, Blyden, no stranger among them, was enthusiastically received by the native pastors and other educated natives who ascribed charges of immorality against him to the machinations of his political enemies.[14]

Blyden had joined the C.M.S. mission in Sierra Leone with the object of reforming its operation from within. His first criticisms of the operations of Christian missions had been within the context of Liberia. In 1860 in an elaborate and eminently sensible memorandum on "Missions in Liberia" prepared for the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, he pointed out that although there was "a vast territory to be taken, and... mighty foes to be overcome", foreign missions, for the most part, confined themselves to settlements of colonists and competed fiercely for membership.[15] The results were: disunity

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[12] See, for instance, Edward W. Blyden, "Mohammedanism in Western Africa", Methodist Quarterly Review, LIII (Jan. 1871), 62-78.

[13] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Cheetham to Venn, 10 Aug. 1871. Cheetham assumed that the rumour about Blyden's immorality was true. He wrote to Venn: "I shall not ask him to my table; and if any pastor put him up to preach, I shall object".

[14] C.M.S. CA1/024, Petition of Native Pastors to Venn, Dec. 1871.

[15] Blyden to J.L. Wilson, 3 Aug. 1860, P.B.F.M. Papers, Vol. 6; enc. Memorandum: "Missions in Liberia".

fostered by denominational teachings;[16] laxity of Church discipline because of fear of losing members to rival churches; incapacity for self-support as relatively small Christian communities had to contribute to as many as four churches; thus much foreign money was spent to little purpose. But despite these criticisms of the inefficiency of Christian missions, as yet his general view of their influence on African society was a typically European one: in 1861 he wrote that "the missionary's work is constructive rather than destructive; he has nothing to demolish; he has only to arrange his materials and proceed to build".[17] But by 1866, he was showing concern over the effects of missionary influence on society: in that year he noted that many European missionaries were "ill-bred" and were disrespectful of Africans and their culture.[18] In Sierra Leone he hoped to persuade European missionaries to show greater respect and appreciation for African customs and institutions, to accelerate the process of delegation of ecclesiastical authority to trained natives; and to extend missionary activities into the interior. As preparation for the last-mentioned objective, Blyden was to teach

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[16] Blyden to J.L.Wilson, 3 Aug. 1860, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 6: enc. Memorandum: "Missions in Liberia". "And you know, sir," Blyden wrote, "how in proportion to their ignorance men delight in controversy. No class of men is more positive, dogmatical and violent than the uninformed. These controversies beget hard feelings and antipathies, and keep the people from uniting...."

[17] Edward W. Blyden, Hope for Africa (New York, 1861), 16.

[18] Blyden, From West Africa to Palestine, 22.

Arabic to select African students at Fourah Bay College, and himself to study and reduce to writing the Fula tongue, which together with Arabic, Hausa and Yoruba were indispensable for extending missionary work into the interior. But his initial efforts were coolly received by the European missionaries. He complained thus to Venn:

> "I find that there is not much sympathy here for the study of native languages or for the interior enterprise. As a general thing, the European missionary, however ardent his zeal in behalf of 'poor benighted Africa' while in Europe as soon as he comes in actual contact with the Negro, his ardour undergoes a sensible refrigeration."[19]

And Blyden's employment was soon to come to an end. He had been appointed before the news of his alleged immorality had reached England. When it did, the parent committee of the C.M.S., "without making any judgment on his case", suspended him until his name could be cleared, Venn reluctantly concurring with the decision.[20] A petition to the parent committee of the C.M.S. by the native pastors vouching for Blyden's innocence and requesting his re-enstatement availed nothing.[21] During

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[19] C.M.S. CA1/047, Blyden to Venn, 16 Oct. 1871.

[20] C.M.S. CA1/L8, Venn to Blyden, 16 Nov. 1871; Venn to Cheetham, 23 Oct. 1871: Venn seemed not to have believed the charge of adultery against Blyden: He wrote to the Bishop: "Upon Mr. Blyden's case we must be content to differ in judgment without mutual recrimination... We fear that you have been too much swayed by reports." See also Venn to Hamilton, 17 Nov. 1871, where he chides European missionaries for feeling "so much hurt" by Blyden's appointment.

[21] C.M.S. CA1/024, Petition of Native Pastors to Venn, Dec. 1871.

the three months between his appointment and his dismissal, European missionaries had refused to cooperate with him, and this had won him the sympathy of Africans and increased his influence among them.

If Blyden could not influence the policy of the C.M.S. as it affected the African from within, he was determined to do so from without. Indeed by the time of his dismissal, and perhaps anticipating it, he had already decided to found a newspaper to propagate his views. And he was quickly able to persuade five native merchants[22] to invest in a printing press. He was determined that this should be a completely Negro venture, and wrote with pride to Venn that "Not one European has given anything towards establishing the paper".[23] The newspaper with Blyden as editor was due to start publication in April 1872.

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[22] These were Syble Boyle, William Grant, T. J. Sawyerr, Thomas Bright and T. J. Macaulay. Like the native pastors, these and other educated natives who supported Blyden were mainly Recaptives or sons of Recaptives. The original Creole element - descendants of Repatriated New World Negroes - whom Blyden grew to detest, were either indifferent or opposed to aspirations for an independent non-denominational African Church and a secular University. Blyden later wrote of the role of Recaptives in this period: "They exceeded the settlers in numbers and influence and exhibited greater moral force than their teachers (Creole settlers), for they displayed a power of organization and self-control of which the settlers had given no example." Lagos Weekly Record, Vol. 11 (6 June 1896): for an analysis of the historical development of Freetown Society and the role played by the different elements, see Arthur H. Porter, Creoledom (London, 1963).

[23] C.M.S. CA1/047, Blyden to Venn, 17 April 1872.

One of Blyden's aims was to have Muslim and Christian Negroes cooperate in working towards one pan-Negro goal. This was a revolutionary idea for there had long existed mutual antagonism and distrust between adherents of the two faiths. From early in the history of the colony, European missionaries and Christian Africans had held Muslims in contempt, regarding them as ignorant, corrupt and superstitious.[24] The Muslims had reciprocated this antagonism and had increased their influence by aggressive proselytizing among Liberated Africans. Blyden's reputation as a friend of Islam had preceded him to Sierra Leone and soon after his arrival there several deputations from among the Fula and Aku Muslims called upon him.[25] Before long he was well-known and popular among them.

Blyden wished to dispel the prejudice against the Muslim Negro. In January 1871 he had published an article on "Mohammedanism in Western Africa" which claimed that Islam had had a salutary influence on West African Negroes for the following reasons: "as an eliminatory or subversive agency, it had displaced or unsettled nothing as good as itself"; it had "established a vast Total Abstinence Society throughout Central Africa"; it was "the most important if not the sole preservative against the desolation of the slave trade"; it had given rise to a corpus of Muslim Negro scholars and was responsible for what-

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[24] Herskovitts, Liberated Africans, 63-64; Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 385.

[25] C.M.S. CA1/047, Blyden to Venn, 6 Sept., 16 Sept., 11 Oct., and 28 Oct. 1871.

ever learning and scholarship there was in West Central Africa; it was a unifying factor "binding tribes together in one strong religious fraternity"; it was a system which fostered egalitarianism; and finally, it encouraged industry which reflected itself in large towns and cities.[26] Blyden's unqualified praise of Islam did not accord with the realities of its operation in West Africa: while it was true that Islam brought advantages to the African without disrupting his society, it was equally true that the Mohammedans, under the pretext of making war against non-believers, had been active slave-traders, ravaging large areas of West Africa.[27]

Ironically, in his high praise of Islam (as well as in his assertion of the superiority of Muslim Negroes over Christian Negroes and his criticisms of missionary activities) Blyden had come to the same conclusion as Richard Burton and Winwood Reade,[28] the two English explorers of West Africa, and Vice-President and member, respectively, of Anthropological Society of London (founded 1863), which fostered the idea of a hierarchy of race of which the Negro was the lowest:[29] Burton and Reade has asserted that Christianity was too

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[26] Blyden, "Mohammedanism in Western Africa", op.cit., 63-77.

[27] See J. Spencer Trimingham, A History of Islam in West Africa, passim.

[28] See Richard Burton, Wanderings in West Africa, passim.

[29] See, for instance, James Hunt (President of the Society), On the Negro's Place in Nature (London, 1863).

elevated and abstract for the African mind. While Blyden was aware of their writings, his conclusions had been arrived at independently. Nor did he believe that the Negro was inherently inferior. Indeed, unlike Burton and Reade, Blyden contended that the spread of Islam and the Arabic language was merely "a preparatory circumstance.... for the introduction of the Gospel". He denied that Muslims were inaccessible to Christian influence. He was hopeful that "once brought within the pale of Christianity, these Mohammedans would be a most effective agency for the propagation of the Gospel in remote regions hitherto impervious to European zeal and enterprise". And by this means "the work of African regeneration would proceed with uninterrupted course and unexampled rapidity".[30]

In his plans for fostering general intercourse between the Coast and the Mohammedan interior, Blyden sought to interest the British Government at Sierra Leone. In a letter of 11 May 1871, to Governor Kennedy, Blyden deplored the lack of "precise information about the country between Sierra Leone and the head waters of the Niger" and recommended its exploration by the Liberian explorer, Benjamin Anderson.[31] He argued that there was need for a link between the colony and the Mohammedan Negroes of the interior who were, in his view, "the only people who now possess amidst the political and moral wilderness of

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[30] Blyden, "Mohammedanism in Western Africa", op.cit., 78.

[31] C.O. 267/312, Blyden to Kennedy, 11 Oct. 1871, enc. in Kennedy to E. R. Wodehouse, 4 Dec. 1871.

inter-tropical Africa, any tolerable form of civil polity or bond of social organization". He pointed out that the interior had great commercial possibilities and endorsed the current view that commercial intercourse was a "very important means" of civilizing pagan Africa. He warned that the French were establishing large commercial interests at Kambia on the Scarcies River and urged the British to adopt energetic measures to forestall them from acquiring commercial and political ascendancy in the area.

In urging the Sierra Leone Government to extend its influence and jurisdiction into the interior, Blyden was appealing to the British tradition of humanitarianism in West Africa, and also giving his own interpretation to the recommendations of the 1865 Select Parliamentary Committee that the British should prepare Africans for self-government before withdrawing from the coast. Ultimately, Blyden envisaged a Christian English-speaking civilization for West Africa and saw this coming about through the extension of the influence and jurisdiction of both Sierra Leone and Liberia and the eventual amalgamation of these two territories. Blyden's letter had been forwarded to the Colonial Office and created some interest there, perhaps more because it was written by a Negro than because of its recommendations. One of the minutes labelled it "very interesting and... a good specimen of what the Negro can attain to".[32] Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Sec-

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[32] C.O. 267/312. Colonial Office Minutes, 3 Jan. 1872.

retary, read it "with much interest" and thought it important enough to have a copy sent to Lord Granville at the Foreign Office. But the British Government was not prepared to assume the added responsibilities in West Africa with which Blyden wished to invest them.

Blyden did not give up trying to persuade the British to embark upon greater imperial responsibilities in West Africa. Two months after his first letter, Blyden himself offered to undertake the exploration of the country to the interior of Sierra Leone "in the interest of geography, ethnology, history and commerce".[33] This time his plea brought results and Blyden "a pure African, and a man of high intelligence", was officially appointed by Governor Kennedy to go on "a mission of Peace and Friendship to the Kings and Chiefs of the Falaba and Sangara Country".[34]

Blyden set out on his expedition from Freetown on 6 January determined, as it were, to show the British why they ought to extend their influence into the interior. After three days travel he came to Kambia "a trading town of considerable importance situated on the south bank of the Great Scarcies River", and here discovered from the Mohammedan Chief, Almamy Al-Hay, and his principal men that the interior was in a very unsettled state as a result of a protracted war between runaway slaves led by Bilâli, a native of Kissy country, and a slave-

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[33] C.O. 267/315, Blyden to Kennedy, 21 Dec. 1871, enc. in Kennedy to Kimberley, 3 Jan. 1872.

[34] C.O. 267/315, Kennedy to Kimberley, 3 Jan. 1872.

holding combination led by Almamy Mumineh, Chief of Kukumah in the Susu country. Blyden reported to Kennedy that the King of Kambia was anxious for the British Government to restore the peace and security of the country, and thus pave the way for the revival of trade, by settling the dispute between the warring groups; the King requested, too, that schools be set up in his town for the instruction of children in the English language.[35]

After two days of further travel, Blyden reached Kukumak, the headquarters of Mumineh, whom he sought to persuade to put an end to the war. He assured the Mohammedan chief that were he to desist from his "aggressive pro-slavery policy", the Government of Sierra Leone would enter into a treaty of friendship with him. Mumineh, whose resources had been exhausted by the war, was amenable to Blyden's counsel: he agreed that the Government of Sierra Leone should act as mediator in the unsettled dispute. Blyden urged the Acting Governor John J. Kendall to act upon this "first ever pacific expression" of Mumineh by sending mediators as soon as possible. He pointed out that if the war was settled the whole region would again be opened to a "pacific and lucrative trade". And as a guarantee of future peace Blyden suggested the colonization of this area by the Sierra Leone Government:

> "This region of the country, from its exceeding fertility, abundance of good timber and large supply of water is well adapted for colonization. A colony of Africans from Sierra

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[35] C.M.S. (Copy), CA1/047, Blyden to Kennedy, 10 Jan. 1872.

> Leone or the Western hemisphere, of men willing to engage in agriculture and moderate training would very soon rise in wealth and importance and save the country from distracting wars."[36]

In his next despatch, Blyden again impressed upon the Governor the potential richness of the country: most if it was fertile prairie land "where thousands of cattle might easily feed and fatten" and tropical vegetables could be produced "in unlimited quantity".[37] He reported that "Iron ore of the greatest purity is widely distributed and we saw several furnaces where large quantities of that useful metal are produced". He recommended "the construction of good common roads in the first instance and of railroads at no distant period". He assured that the terrain would present no major engineering difficulties. He was careful to insist that the financial outlay for the development of this area need not be great and yet would bring rich dividends:

> "The expense would be comparatively insignificant as lands could be secured for a mere trifle: and the traffic which would be attracted to the road from various wealthy districts, now entirely unknown, even by name at Sierra Leone, would in a short time enrich the shareholders in such an enterprise and develop to an extent incomprehensible, the commercial importance of Sierra Leone."

From Kukumah, Blyden's expedition passed in a northerly direction through the trading towns of Ganjah and Sumatra, and thence in an easterly direction into territory terrorized by "an impudent and warlike" Mohammedan people - the Houbous. The disordered state of this

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[36] C.M.S. (Copy), CA1/047, Blyden to Kendall, 26 Jan. 1872.

[37] Ibid., Blyden to Kendall, 5 Feb. 1872.

territory was for Blyden another reason for British intervention. He reported to the Governor that the Houbous

> "are fast developing their occasional, and unconnected acts of brigandage under the dexterous euphemism of war against the enemies of Islam, by which they enlist in their horrible service recruits from among the zealous Mohammedan youths in their country. A railway passing through this country would cure all these evils and confer incalculable blessings upon these people".[38]

Blyden finally reached Falaba on 1 March after an eventful journey through a route that had not hitherto been traversed. He was well-received by the King of Falaba with whom, on behalf of the Sierra Leone Government, he entered a treaty of friendship. Blyden reported the friendly disposition of the King towards the Sierra Leone Government thus:

> "He (the king) begged me to assure the Governor that he has put himself and his country under the protection of the English; that the country is open to British subjects as far as the influence of Falaba extends into the interior - that whatever the Governor-in-Chief of Sierra Leone wishes him to do he will do, for he believes that Her Majesty's Government have at heart the welfare of his country."[39]

In his official report Blyden again made a strong plea for British intervention in the interior by appealing to their humanitarian and commercial instincts. First he stressed the need of the interior for civilized contact:

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[38] C.M.S. (Copy), CA1/047, Blyden to Kendall, 5 Feb. 1872.

[39] Ibid., Blyden to Kendall, 4 March 1872.

> "The route adopted by the Expedition from Kambia to Falaba must be considered the darkest portion of the interior accessible from Sierra Leone. No foreigner had ever traversed it... The people are as a rule besotted pagans, entirely at large from the influence of Mohammedanism. Indolence has long been their habit. They live together by the labour of their slaves and extorting heavy taxes from the poor interior traders who happen to pass through their towns. The ordinary instincts of human nature which suggest plans for growth and improvement have not been developed in them. They have existed for ages under conditions altogether incompatible with human progress."[40]

Blyden dared the British Government to accept the challenge of developing this area:

> "a great work devolves upon the Government of Sierra Leone - a work with which the commercial prosperity of the colony and the civilization of millions are connected - England stands foremost among nations as the energetic promoter of whatever concerns the welfare of the African continent. Her colonial possessions on this coast and her commercial and moral ascendancy especially qualify her through her Agents resident here to contribute largely towards rescuing the tribes accessible to her influence from their present abject condition and assist them to take part in the work of the world's progress."[41]

Once again the Colonial Office was clearly impressed with Blyden's Report and its recommendations but a stringent financial policy would not permit it to go beyond granting stipends to the more important chiefs of the interior.

Blyden also appealed to missionary societies to extend their operations into the interior. He wrote to his friend, Venn:

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[40] C.O. 267/316, Blyden to Governor John Pope Hennesy, 4 March 1872: Report of the Expedition to Falaba.

[41] Ibid.

> "I think that a Christian missionary would be welcomed at Falaba; and it would be an important centre for the aggressive operations of the Church of Christ. I beg most earnestly to call the attention of the C.M.S. to Kambia and Falaba as important outposts and strategic points in the great warfare which is to restore the kingdom of this world to their legitimate heir."[42]

This appeal, too, met with no response.

But paradoxically, although Blyden was inviting the missionaries to extend their operations in the interior, he remained highly critical of their activities on the coast. Before he left on his expedition to the interior, he indicated clearly that his clashes with European missionaries there were by no means at an end. In a letter of 5 January 1872 to the Hon. William Grant, a well-to-do native merchant, and a member of the Legislative Council, Blyden charged that European missionary education had failed to develop "pride of race" in Africans, an attribute which had given another down-trodden people - the Jews - their "unquenchable vitality". To supply this want, he advocated the setting up of a West African University in Sierra Leone "conducted by earnest and well-cultivated Negroes!" He optimistically assured Grant that

> "You will find that, with such an institution here, in a short time, there will be a general diffusion of that higher intelligence which originates public measures, which stimulates the people, moderates their impulses, sustains and gives weight to noble enterprises, creates and expounds a healthy public sentiment and accelerates the moral and spiritual progress of the race."[43]

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[42] C.M.S. (Copy), CA1/O47, Blyden to Kendall, 19 Jan. 1872.

[43] The West African University: Correspondence between E.W.Blyden and His Excellency, J. Pope Hennessy... (Freetown, 1872), 2-3.

On his return from the interior Blyden found unexpected support for his "nationalist" ideas from the new Governor, John Pope-Hennessy, who had succeeded Kennedy in February 1872. Pope-Hennessy was a highly controversial Irish-Catholic, who as an Irish member of the British House of Commons, and as Governor of Labuan, had established a reputation for espousing the cause of the under-privileged.[44] He continued this aspect of his career in Sierra Leone: although his was an interim governorship which lasted only one year, he proved himself to be the most enthusiastic exponent of the recommendations of the 1865 Parliamentary Committee by his strong and open support for native aspirations.

Back in Freetown Blyden began his newspaper. It was meant to herald a "new departure". It was the first newspaper in Sierra Leone designed to "serve the race purpose".[45] Its very title - the Negro - hitherto used in Sierra Leone only as a term of abuse,[46] was intended to stimulate Africans into thinking about the future welfare of the race. The strong objection which was in fact registered against the title was anticipated and rebutted in the first issue:

> "It has been called the Negro (if explanation be necessary) because it is intended to represent and defend the interest of that peculiar type of humanity known as the negro, with

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[44] For the Governor's career, see James Pope-Hennessy, Verandah: Some Episodes in the Crown Colonies, 1867-1889 (London, 1964).

[45] Sierra Leone Weekly News, VI (6 Sept. 1890), article on "The West African Press".

[46] Ibid., also Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 338.

> all the affiliated and collateral branches whether on this continent or elsewhere.
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> "West African' was considered definite enough, but too exclusive for the comprehensive intentions entertained by the promoters of the scheme - viz: to recognize and greet the brotherhood of the race wherever found...
>
> The term is perfectly legitimate and under our circumstances indispensable."[47]

The publishers thus clearly intended that the Negro was to be no parochial newspaper but a pan-Negro organ. One year later Blyden made the proud claim that "The title of this paper, at first somewhat misunderstood, we now know to be generally accepted and cordially approved by all thinking members of the race in West Africa, in the West Indies, and in the United States, and we have constant proof of their heartfelt sympathy with the views to which we are committed".[48]

Blyden continued his campaign for a West African University. Knowing that the sympathy of the Governor lay with Africans, Blyden sought his aid in attempting to establish "proper" educational facilities in Sierra Leone. On 6 December 1872, he wrote to the Governor:

> "If in the Government of the Settlements, native agency is to be welcomed and encouraged and not despised and excluded, if the people are ever to become fit to be entrusted with the functions of self-government, if they are ever to become ripe for free and progressive institutions, it must be by a system of education adopted to the exigencies of the country and race: such as shall prepare the intelligent youths for the responsibilities which

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[47] The West African University.

[48] C.O. 267/324, No. 978, enclosure: the Negro, Vol. 11, No. 1 (16 April 1873). This is the only copy of the Negro known to have survived. And judging from this single issue - a small tabloid of four pages with local news and issues - its claim to be a pan-Negro organ was more

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> must devolve upon them,and without interfering with their native instincts and throwing them altogether out of harmony and sympathy with their own countrymen, shall qualify them to be efficient guides and counsellors and rulers of the people.."

Blyden believed with Venn that each race had its peculiar talents and abilities, and he deduced from this that each should receive such education as would develop its innate qualities; and that the education which suited Europeans might not benefit Africans. This was why in asking for Government aid in building a University, he insisted that it should be run by Negro scholars "from different parts of the world". The aim of such a University would be "to give the people the opportunity and power of a free and healthy development - to bring out that individuality and originality of character which is a sure sign of advancing civilization and culture".[49]

Encouraged by Pope-Hennessy, Blyden was harsher than ever in his condemnation of European missionary influence on Africans:

> "The system or want of system to which the natives of this country have been subjected in consequence of the conflicting dogmatic creed introduced from abroad, has unduly biased their development and hampered their progress. All efforts here ... seems to have been directed mainly to a solution of the question of who shall be uppermost; hence denominational rivalry and the wasting of time and energy in localities al-

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(cont.) symbolic than real. However, there seems to have been subscribers to it in the West Indies, the United States and England: see Blyden to Coppinger, 6 April, 1872, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 16, pt. 1. Among the subscribers in England was Henry Venn, see Venn to Blyden, 17 May 1872, C.M.S. CAL/I8.

49 The West African University, 8.

> ready occupied, instead of carrying the Gospel to 'regions beyond' and proclaiming it to every creature: Free learning has with very few exceptions, been substituted by the narrow and dwarfing influence of ecclesiastical dogmatism. We have been torn into discordant and unprofitable sectaries by our pretending to understand the different elaborate creeds brought to us from Europe, and confusing ourselves with ecclesiastical quarrels handed down from a remote antiquity, which even in Europe only those who are learned in a particular department can grasp and comprehend."[50]

This was not an argument for the withdrawal of foreign missionaries. It was an argument for a change in their attitudes and methods, for Blyden believed that Christianity, in its simple essence, taught by men who understood or attempted to understand the African character, customs and institutions, was the highest influence to which the Negro could be exposed.

In a second letter to the Governor on 9 December Blyden emphasized that "a government which is more inert in developing the intellectual and moral character of these tribes than in availing itself of the material resources of the country is of doubtful utility to the race". He gave as an added reason for the founding of a University the need for an indigenous literature which he hoped would "silently but effectually transform the moral and intellectual condition of the people".[51]

Though sympathetic, Hennessy replied that because there had been in the past so many "monuments of benevolent failures" in Sierra Leone,

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[50] The West African University, 7.

[51] Ibid., 11.

the initiative for founding such a University must come from Africans themselves. Blyden, equally aware that there would not be enough public support for such a scheme, conveniently attributed this to the "warping influence" of missionary education. He insisted that Europeans "owed Africans a great debt for unrequited physical labour" and so Africans did not "simply ask it as a favour but claimed it as a right" that European governments should aid in "unfettering and enlightening the Negro mind, and placing him in a position to act well his part among the productive agencies of time".[52] After further discussions of the subject with Africans, Hennessy transmitted the correspondence between himself and Blyden to the Colonial Office, adding his own plea for "the establishment of a West African University founded on a humble basis".[53] Blyden was hopeful that the Governor's recommendation would be implemented and already he anticipated the results:

> "The tropical blood that beats passionately in the veins of every Negro will manifest itself in a new social force, in new institutions, and a new literature. The present straight jacket of unmodified European tradition holds back the mind of many a master."[54]

Pope-Hennessy had proved a much firmer ally of the Africans than they could have hoped of any British Governor. In a further despatch of 31 January 1872, he reminded the Colonial Secretary that it was

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[52] The West African University, 13.

[53] C.O. 267/317, Hennessy to Kimberley, 28 Dec. 1872.

[54] The West African University, 16.

the "avowed object" of British policy to train the natives "so as to render them capable of Self-Government" and again urged him "to establish that on which alone a safe foundation of African Home Government can be built - that is, a comprehensive system of Public Instruction."[55] Hennessy agreed with Blyden that a missionary education "spoilt the character of Africans". Yet he urged, contradictorily, the acceleration of Africans to high offices; he compared the ability and efficiency of African officials with Europeans to the distinct advantage of the latter; and regretted that Africans were placed in an "inferior position to Europeans both as regards emolument and authority".[56]

The Governor had shared, too, Blyden's enthusiasm for linking Sierra Leone with the interior. In January 1873 Pope-Hennessy appointed him Government Agent to the Interior and Blyden set out on another official expedition, this time to Timbo the capital of the Mohammedan kingdom of Futa Jallon. The Governor and his retinue accompanied the expedition as far as Kambia whither the leading Susu, Limba and Temne chiefs had been summoned in an attempt to settle the Bilâli war. At a public meeting attended by some two thousand Africans, the Governor spoke "on the great subject of the promotion of African interest".[57]

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[55] C.O. 267/317, Hennessy to Kimberley, 31 Dec. 1872.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Blyden to Coppinger, 11 Jan. 1873, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 16, pt. 1.

The Hon. William Grant, a member of the Governor's party, "spoke on the importance of peace and harmony in the country for the development and organization of the great African nationality which must be established in this country".[58] And when Blyden "saw the enthusiasm of the crowd, he was encouraged to think that a great civilized state in the tropics will yet come to pass".[59] No doubt he saw proof of this, too, in Billeh, "a University town - the Oxford of the region" - in a "sequestered" position on the banks of the Scarcies river.[60] Members of the expedition and of the Governor's party visited the "Muslim University" where "five hundred young men studied", to pay their respects to Fode Tarawally, its President, and "the great literary celebrity of this region". The President showed his visitors "a wonderful collection of Arabic manuscripts on various subjects - some copies of books brought from Arabia, and some original African compositions".[61] This, for Blyden, was proof of the salutary influence of Islam on West African Negroes.

Everywhere on his way to Timbo Blyden found evidence which he thought proclaimed the superiority of the Muslim Negro over the Christian Negro on the coast. At Moala, sixteen miles north east of Melakori, Blyden witnessed another manifestation of Muslim Negro

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[58] Blyden to Coppinger, 11 Jan. 1873, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 16, pt. 1.

[59] Ibid.

[60] C.M.S. CA1/047, Blyden to Venn, 19 Jan. 1872. Blyden had also visited the town and the University on his way to Falaba.

[61] Blyden to Coppinger, 11 Jan. 1873, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 16, pt. 1.

ability. When he arrived here on 17 January he found that thirteen chiefs from an area "extending 150 miles inland from the coast to the borders of Futah Jallon" had already been in deliberation six weeks in an attempt to bring the wars of that area to an end. Blyden's pride in the proceedings of the deliberation was evident. He commented:

> "I should have liked to have taken for the use of the Government a photographic representation of the chiefs in Council. They were all men of intellectual physiognomy and all Mohammedans. Their discussions were conducted with as much gravity as those of any deliberative assembly in foreign countries. If they do not display lofty statesmanship, they give honest expositions of their views; they have not yet risen to the art of diplomatic mystery and enigmatic declarations."[62]

From Moala the expedition went on to the slave town of Fansiggah. Blyden had praise for the practice here of facilitating the conversion of pagan slaves to Islam. He reported that the king had built a mosque among the pagan slaves and made it compulsory that the children be taught the Koran; it was optional for the adults to attend prayers. This practice seems to have been quite common among Mohammedan chiefs.[63]

Blyden's expedition reached its destination on 4 February. The route to Timbo through Mohammedan territory had been in sharp contrast to that to Falaba through pagan territory: on the latter Blyden found

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[62] C.O. 267/320, No. 6209, Report on the Timbo Expedition.

[63] Ibid.

only degradation, disorder and lack of industry; on the former he found evidence of intellectual endeavour, industry and hospitality. Timbo, like Billeh demonstrated aspects of African life that commanded respect. It was strategically located at the "western base of a high hill facing a beautiful plain", and although comparatively small it owed its tremendous importance to the fact that it was both the administrative centre as well as the paramount centre of Mohammedan faith and learning in Futa Jallon. Blyden advised that the cooperation of Timbo was "indispensable" in any intercourse the Government might wish to establish with Central Africa.[64]

On 5 February Blyden completed negotiations for "a Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship between Alimano Ibrahima Suri, King of Futah Jallon and his successors on the one part, and the Governor of Sierra Leone and his successors on the other". The treaty stipulated that the King was to be paid a stipend of one hundred pounds annually. In his report Blyden made his usual recommendations: steps should be taken to increase trade links between Sierra Leone and the Mohammedan interior, and a consular agent should be appointed to superintend the commercial interests of the Sierra Leone Government. To the missionaries he made his familiar plea:

> "The Christian Church cannot afford to look with indifference upon so interesting a field of effort. The people need the Gospel. They need the intelligent and zealous missionary - not only for his evangelical and spiritual labours, but for the literary benefits he may confer upon

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[64] C.O. 267/320, No. 6209, Report on the Timbo Expedition.

> the country. He will aid in the improvement of the Mandingo and Fulah vernaculars, and thus remove the hindrances to the development of a purely native literature."[65]

The pattern was familiar to the end: once again the Colonial Office found Blyden's report "well-written and interesting" but could not act on it.

On the coast itself, the native pastors stimulated by Blyden became bolder in their agitation for an independent native church. This agitation was led by James Johnson, the most race conscious and the most outstanding of the young native pastors. As pastor of Christ Church, Pademba Road, Johnson hadgiven ample evidence that he believed that Christianity as taught by Europeans required modifications to suit the needs of Africans.[66] In a letter which appeared in the Negro of 18 December 1872, Johnson gave as his opinion that "The use of our liturgy and canons is a matter of time".[67] In a correspondence between himself and Pope-Hennessy, Johnson complained about foreign missionaries in a manner which echoed Blyden's own criticisms:

> "In the work of elevating Africans, foreign teachers have always proceeded with their work on the assumption that the Negro or the African is in every one of his normal susceptibilities an inferior race, and that it is needful in everything to give him a foreign model to

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[65] C.O. 267/320, No. 6209, Report on the Timbo Expedition.

[66] Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 351.

[67] C.M.S. CA1/025e, quoted in Cheetham to Venn, 1 Feb. 1873.

> copy; no account has been made of our peculiarities - our languages, enriched with the traditions of centuries; our parables, many of them the quintessence of family and national histories; our modes of thought, influenced more or less by local circumstances; our poetry and manufacture, which, though rude, had their own tales to tell; our social habits and even the necessities of our climate. It has been forgotten that European ideas, tastes, languages, and social habits, like those of other nations, have been influenced ... by geographical positions and climatic peculiarities; that what is esteemed by one country polite, may be justly esteemed by another rude and barbarous; and that God does not intend to have the race confounded, but that the Negro or African should be raised upon his own idiosyncracies."[68]

In Blyden's absence in the interior, Johnson became editor of the Negro, and in it deprecated the "mistaken benevolence of Protestant missionary societies", emphasized that "the Church of England is not our church", and expressed longing for an independent African church.[69]

But plans for an independent non-denominational African church faced three-fold difficulties: opposition of European missionaries, the already entrenched sectarianism among Africans, and the difficulty of raising funds adequate to support and administer such an institution. While there was some inter-denominational support for it among Africans, this did not reflect itself in substantial contributions to the Pastorate, perennially in financial difficulties.[70] Moreover,

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[68] Quoted in Edward W. Blyden, "Christian Missions in West Africa", Fraser's Magazine, New Series, Vol. XIV (Oct. 1876), 517.

[69] C.M.S. CA1/025e, quoted in Cheetham to Venn, 1 Feb. 1873.

[70] C.M.S. CA1/09, Tenth Annual Report of the Sierra Leone Native Pastorate, 15.

an annual grant of £500 which the Pastorate received since 1866 from the Government was opposed by Benjamin Tregaskis, Superintendent of the thriving Wesleyan Mission in Freetown, and a man popular with Africans for having persuaded Pope-Hennessy to abolish the "oppressive" Road and House and Land Taxes which his predecessor had imposed. Tregaskis argued that the grant was a use of public money to favour one religious body to "the serious disadvantages of the others", making "peace ecclesiastical" impossible;[71] and his carefully cultivated African proteges among them Samuel Lewis, the young and promsing lawyer, supported his point of view. Resentful of the attacks on missionary work in the colony, Tregaskis ridiculed the idea of an independent African Church and of a West African University run by Negroes. The threatened grant was, of course, defended in the Negro; and six laymen, representing three denominations, pleaded with Pope-Hennessy to do all in his power to ensure "the safety and success of the nascent institution".[72] Although the grant survived Tregaskis' determined attack it was abolished in 1876 for reasons of economy.

When Bishop Cheetham returned to Sierra Leone after six months' furlough in England, he found a new militancy among Africans. He

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[71] C.O. 267/324, No. 978; Enc.: News Sheet printed by Wesleyan Missionary Press: Tregaskis to Hennessy 20. Nov. 1872.

[72] C.M.S. CA1/09, S. Boyle, H. Lumpkin, T.W.Hughes, G.P.Bull, T.J. Sawyerr, and W.M. Grant to Hennessy, 4 Dec., 1872.

wrote to Venn: " I return to my diocese. I find that the influence of Mr. Hennessy's administration and the presence of Mr. Blyden to have produced most important and unfortunate results on the minds of the native pastors and some of the other upper natives".[73] He felt that "national feeling... is not finding expression in the Negro but the Negro is spreading it on thick before the people are ready". There was much truth in the Bishop's statement and yet Blyden's agitation had begun to create a new race consciousness among Africans in Sierra Leone. He himself charged that "the great source of evil is Mr. Blyden, he has so dwelt upon this race feeling that... a most strong and virulent anti-white feeling had arisen".[74] The Bishop had been horrified, too, to "find the place ablaze with a scheme for a godless West African University under Government and Negro control".[75] He saw Blyden's advocacy of a secular University merely as an attempt to "feather his own nest".

Cheetham was further upset by the fact that James Johnson had openly associated himself with Blyden's views. He was all the more so, since he believed that Johnson was not speaking "just his own senti-

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[73] C.M.S. CA1/09.

[74] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Cheetham to Secs. of the C.M.S., 9 April, 1873.

[75] Ibid., Cheetham to Secs of the C.M.S., 13 March, 1873.

ments" but those of the native pastors as well; "he is their chosen champion and his words are representative words", he wrote to Venn. He was astounded that Johnson while "still doing the duties of a clergyman of the Church of England [could] contemplate at the earliest possible opportunity leaving the Church at which he is at present ministering and devoting himself to establish he knows not what...."[76] Nor did Venn himself go uncensured. The Bishop frankly informed him that "a good deal of the trouble" had been caused by his encouragement of the native pastorate which "though convenient was not without objection".[77]

But Venn died on 13 January, 1873, before he could receive the Bishop's censure. The native pastors regarded his death as a great blow to their cause and as soon as the news reached Sierra Leone they convened to express their grief at his demise and their appreciation of his efforts to promote African interest. Cheetham was invited to this meeting but refused to attend because of his "great disgust that men who had so recently applauded all that Mr. Blyden and Hennessy had written in their attacks on missionaries", should now meet to pass laudatory resolutions on Venn.[78] This remark showed either that Cheetham himself did not understand the intention of Venn's policy, or more likely,

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[76] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Cheetham to Venn, 1 Feb. 1873.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., Cheetham to Secs of the C.M.S., 13 March, 1873.

that he was out of sympathy with that policy. The native pastors, for their part, continued to draw inspiration from Venn's policy in their efforts to establish an independent African church.[79]

The Bishop sought ways of making the native pastors capitulate. First, he threatened to withhold from the native pastorate, funds which he had collected on its behalf in England.[80] And while the pastors remained recalcitrant, he refused to recommend any of them for promotion. Thus, when Governor Hennessy, true to his policy of promoting qualified Africans, recommended Henry Johnson, an able linguist, for a vacant position of Colonial Chaplaincy,[81] Cheetham wrote to Lord Kimberley protesting that Johnson was not a suitable candidate, and recommending instead J.A. Lamb, a European missionary at Sierra Leone.[82] The Bishop informed a Secretary of the C.M.S. that Johnson was in fact "a promising native" but that "Mr. Blyden and race feeling have damaged him."[83] Kimberley referred the Bishop's letter to the Governor, and Hennessy wrote to Cheetham enclosing a copy of his despatch to the Colonial Secretary recommending Henry

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[79] See, for instance, CA1/09, The Eleventh Annual Report of the Sierra Leone Native Pastorate Auxilliary Association.

[80] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Cheetham to Venn, 1 Feb., 1873.

[81] C.O. 267/320, Hennessy to Kimberley, 4 Jan., 1873. Hennessy took this opportunity to again urge upon the Colonial Secretary a general policy of appointing Africans to responsible positions. He wrote; "I have seen so many evils resulting from the employment of Europeans here and in other settlements in posts for which there are competent natives on the spot that I venture to repeat /that/ ... "wherever it can possibly be done I would strongly recommend dispensing with the services of Europeans on the coast". He was sure that "the Bishop

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Johnson for the Colonial Chaplaincy, and pointing out to the Bishop that "there can be no difficulty in selecting a native to perform the duties better than a European".[84] Hennessy then wrote to Kimberley informing him that the Bishop's recommendation of a European had "caused much disappointment" among Africans.[85] But about three weeks later, and before the matter could be settled, Hennesy's temporary but eventful appointment came to an end to the great grief of Africans. And the Bishop's advice prevailed: Henry Johnson was not appointed to the Colonial Chaplaincy which was eventually filled by a European.

As part of his campaigns to subdue the pastors, the Bishop required them to answer a series of questions designed to test their loyalty to him and the Church of England. In reply the pastors were gracious but evasive:

> "They would waive any rights which they had to decline to answer certain of the questions but if some of the answers appeared defective they would offer in excuse

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(cont.) would have no difficulty recommending to your Lordship from the Native Pastors a far better Colonial Chaplain than he could hope to find amongst those who offer themselves in England for such positions."

[82] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Cheetham to Henry Wright, 5 Feb. 1873. The Bishop's letter is not among the Colonial Office records. Kimberley had sent it on to Hennessy who probably did not return it.

[83] Ibid.

[84] C.O. 267/320, Hennessy to Cheetham, 24 Jan. 1873.

[85] Ibid., Hennessy to Kimberley, 1 Feb. 1873.

> the nature of the inquiries, some of which referred to topics out of their range as pastors and did not at all concern them. They did not understand Mr. Hennessy to mean slander by his letters. On the contrary, his conduct towards them seemed to proclaim friendship more than anything else. As to the grave evil done through mistaken benevolence, they were not prepared to say what the nature of those evils were, and who did them. As to what they were in relation to the Church of England, they answered that they were the legitimate offspring of that Church and will ever remember with gratitude the good done them through her. They were not proprietors of the Negro and were not responsible for opinions expressed therein. But they were free to confess that James Johnson had done a great service to the pastorate at a very important crisis..."[86]

The Bishop had succeeded in putting the pastors, with the exception of James Johnson, somewhat on the defensive. They were, in fact, becoming unhappy in their alliance with Blyden and the proprietors of the Negro because of the laymen's untempered criticism of missionary activities. This was even more evident when the Missionary Leaves Association, an English organization formed to aid Native Pastorates, wrote a very paternal letter to the native pastors reminding them of the "advantages" which the C.M.S. had bestowed upon them and prayed them to desist from their "suicidal policy" and not to be "led away by misguided men and plausible and deceptive representation".[87] In reply, the pastors claimed that they had been "grossly misrepresented". They disclaimed that the views of the Negro were their own and even

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[86] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Native Pastors to Bishop Cheetham, 3 April, 1873.

[87] C.M.S. CA1/09, Address from the Missionary Leaves Association to the Native Church and Pastorate in Sierra Leone, 4 April 1873.

admitted that they did not endorse many of its sentiments. They denied that James Johnson was their spokesman or that they believed that "grave evils" had resulted from European influence on Africans.[88] But if the native pastors found it prudent to dissociate themselves from the more strident charges against European missionaries, they still insisted that they "contemplate the growth of their church into a national institution".

As a result of the controversy between the native pastors and the European missionaries, the parent committee of the C.M.S. decided to invite James Johnson to England to confer with him on "the state of things in Sierra Leone".[89] This invitation coming at the height of the controversy fired the imagination of Sierra Leoneans as to the possible outcome: rumours were rife in Bishop Cheetham's words "that Johnson was going to plead for a black Governor to be sent; a black bishop in a little while and with the Society on behalf of the African University".[90] The Negro assured that Johnson will discuss "questions of vital importance to the perpetuity of their political and ecclesiastical institutions".[91] And certainly the articulate

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[88] C.M.S. CA1/09, The Native Pastors to the Secretary of the Missionary Leaves Association, 29 May 1873.

[89] C.M.S. Minutes of Committee of Correspondence, 10 March 1873, C.M.S. Committee Minutes, Vol. 39.

[90] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Cheetham to Secs. of the C.M.S. 21 April 1873.

[91] C.O. 267/324, No. 978, enclosure: The Negro, Vol. 2, No. 2, (16 April 1873).

section of the community was optimistic in a vague way that Johnson's visit would be "productive of much good to Africa at large, and to the Sierra Leone Native Church".[92]

Both laymen and pastors sent letters of congratulation and support to Johnson. The laymen wished Johnson to have

> "the enlightened friends of the Negro race in England lend us all the aid they can in securing on the spot the means of a liberal and comprehensive education for our children and for the children of our aboriginal brethren... such a system as shall free us from the present necessity of contracting foreign tastes and habits, of importing European conceptions on many subjects into a sphere in which they are wholly inapplicable and which so far as we are influenced by them impair our energies efficiency (sic) as a portion of a distinct family of the human race."[93]

But, perhaps less confident without gubernatorial moral support, they no longer insisted on a secular university;[94] as an alternative they were prepared to accept the reconstruction of Fourah Bay College to make it the centre of higher learning in West Africa. Finally, they congratulated Johnson "on visiting England at a time when your mind has already been formed and your views sufficiently matured to preserve you from the danger of being bewildered or smothered by the

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[92]C.M.S. CA1/0123, Native Pastors to Johnson, 19 April 1873.

[93]Ibid., Boyle, etc. to Johnson, April 1873.

[94]Blyden was not among the signers of the laymen's letter.

present state of European civilization".

The pastors were not quite so convinced of the dangers of European civilization for the African, they asked Johnson to "suggest the education in England by the Government of a select number of qualified youths in various branches".[95] But for them, too, this was an alternative scheme; they preferred to have Negroes from the West Indies brought to Sierra Leone as teachers. They asked Johnson to discuss with the Colonial Office the possibility of large scale emigration "of our West Indian Brethren, pure Negroes, as artisans, mechanics and agriculturists...." Such a class of men were necessary in Sierra Leone because "we cannot reasonably expect England in these days to send out her sons to teach us these things in a climate so enervating to Europeans generally".

In his replies,[96] Johnson showed that he was optimistic of the future; he foresaw an independent African church "free from foreign sectarian differences" as the first step in the "redemption of Africa", and he believed that "the latter day glory of the Negro race would exceed the former".

On hearing of Johnson's intended visit to England, Cheetham's first impulse "was to be humourous and write him a note of tenderest

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[95] C.M.S. CA1/0123, Native Pastors to Johnson, 19 April 1873.

[96] Ibid. Johnson to Native Pastors, 17 April 1873; Johnson to Boyle etc. April 1873.

condolence, assuring him that he need not fear of becoming a black white..."[97] But once he had curbed that impulse he came to realize that he was really unhappy about the decision of the parent committee to invite the African to England. He feared that Johnson would receive support in England "no matter what nonsense he may talk as to native governor and bishop".[98] The Bishop was not at all satisfied that the parent committee will not unwittingly become the dupe of Johnson. He wrote warning the members: "I cannot help but wish you had a little more practical experience in dealing with men who have not reached our level of civilization, and knew what traits in a man they think meanly of and at once take advantage of."[99] He urged discretion upon them; he warned them "to take great care in your use of words etc. etc. or we shall have the Negro ablaze with his reception".[100] The Bishop's apprehension extended to thinking that Johnson, through Pope-Hennessy's influence, might be induced to accept a Roman Catholic bishopric of Sierra Leone.[101]

No sooner had Johnson left for England than the struggle between the two opposing forces centred on the concrete issue of the appointment

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[97] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Cheetham to Hutchinson, 9 April 1873.

[98] Ibid., Cheetham to the Secs. of the C.M.S., 21 April 1873.

[99] Ibid., Cheetham to Secs. of the C.M.S., 10 May 1873.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., Cheetham to Secs. of the C.M.S. 21 April 1873.

of a Director of Public Instruction in Sierra Leone. The position was first created in September 1870, and the duties consisted of inspecting government schools and recommending the amount of grant to be awarded to each. In view of the recent controversy on education, it was certain that both sides would take an unusually keen interest in the appointment. Blyden, as one "deeply interested in the work of educational reform in West Africa", and who bore in mind the recommendation of the Select Parliamentary Committee of 1865, applied for the position.[102] The application of the Negro scholar was strongly endorsed by the acting Governor, Major Alexander Bravo, who thought that Blyden "as a highly educated Negro" with "an unobtrusive manner" and "temperate habits" was well qualified for the position.[103]

Bishop Cheetham, quite predictably, thought otherwise. When he heard that the Negro scholar had applied for the position, he prayed that "the Lord guide us in this matter and avert Mr. Blyden getting it".[104] But he did not believe in the efficacy of his own prayer; he wrote urging a friend of his to apply for the position and later to the parent committee of the C.M.S. urging them to seek out and suggest a suitable candidate to the Colonial Office.[105] However, no qualified

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[102] C.O. 267/321, Blyden to Alexander Bravo, 13 May 1873.

[103] Ibid., Bravo to Administer-in-Chief, A. M. Harley, 14 May 1873.

[104] C.M.S. CA1/025e, Cheetham to Secs. of C.M.S., 24 May 1873.

[105] Ibid.

British candidate seemed interested in the position. Of the few applicants, Blyden was the only one considered qualified. But the Colonial Office, concerned above all with keeping the peace, and fearing that Blyden's appointment "will probably create a disturbance in Sierra Leone",[106] turned down his application. The position itself remained unfilled and was subsequently abolished.

Ostensibly on the grounds of ill-health, but probably because he had not been appointed to the position of Director of Public Education, Blyden resigned as Agent to the Interior on 22 October 1873. On the same day he wrote a long letter to Lord Kimberley offering advice, not altogether new, for the formulation of a new policy for British West Africa.[107] He informed the Colonial Secretary that "England has been marked out for the future work of civilization in Africa" and that this might best be accomplished by pursuing "a uniform and persistent policy". He urged the appointment of governors who would show a sympathetic appreciation of the African character and were keen on seeing the African improve. He deprecated "the frequent interruption in the office of Governors-in-chief" which often resulted in a discontinuity of policy. He advised measures which would remove from the chiefs of the interior "the idea of vacillation or indifference

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[106] C.O. 267/321, No. 7165, Colonial Office Minutes, 18 July 1873.

[107] C.O. 267/324, No. 12887, Blyden to Kimberley, 22 October 1873.

on the part of the government", and to him the most effective way for the British Government to do this was "to take charge of Western Soudan". Once again he recommended that the British Government extend its "educational influence" throughout its colonies:

> "Some means ought to be provided by which, under Government's patronage and supervision, a thorough education may be brought within the reach of the masses in the settlements, as well as of the children of influential natives of the interior....
>
> There is hardly an element of life of the people which does not depend upon this question of education, whether trade, agriculture, interior affairs, ecclesiastical institutions or sanitary improvements. And any Government which will give to these settlements an efficient and comprehensive system of education will add to the imperishable claims by which England has deserved the gratitude of the African race...."[108]

Yet again the Colonial Office quietly rebuffed Blyden. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen, considered his recommendations "somewhat impractical and visionary". And Lord Kimberley commented that "taking charge of the Western Soudan" was "a project of considerable magnitude and audacity", and one to which "Just now the British Government does not seem much disposed".[109]

But Blyden was characteristically persistent. When a new and more imperial-minded British Government under Benjamin Disraeli came into power in February 1874, at the same time that British troops were

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[108] C.O. 267/324, No. 12887, Blyden to Kimberley, 22 October 1873.

[109] Ibid. Colonial Office Minutes.

finally subduing the Ashanti , and there arose the possibility of a reversal of the recommended policy of territorial non-extension in West Africa,[110] Blyden again felt induced to let his views be known at the Colonial Office. He pointed out to the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnavon, "the fundamental error" of the British that it was "necessary in order to develop trade to encourage the feeble and demoralised natives on the coast in hostility to the more industrious, more intelligent, and better organized races of the interior".[111] He hoped that as a result of the experience of the Ashanti War, the British would adopt a policy of establishing "amicable relations... with the superior natives of the interior to be perpetuated by sympathetic intercouse which will be at once more rational, satisfactory and profitable." Again was Blyden seeking to use the British as agents of his pan-Negro programme.

Johnson had arrived in England in May and was kindly received but quickly disarmed by the parent committee of the C.M.S. who averred that it would be premature to grant ecclesiastical independence to Africans;[112] the committee urged mutual tolerance and forbearance between Africans and Europeans. To ensure that the controversy in Sierra Leone would come to an end, the parent committee transferred Johnson to the Breadfruit Mission, Lagos. The native pastors protested strongly against

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[110] John D. Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition of West Africa (London, 1963), 169-172.

[111] C.O. 879/8, African No. 82. Blyden to Governor Berkeley, 12 Feb. 1874, enc. in Berkeley to Carnarvon, 8 May 1874.

[112] C.M.S. Committee Minutes, Vol. 4; Meeting of the Correspondance Committee of the C.M.S., 16 Dec.

Johnson's transfer[113] but to no avail.

Nor were Johnson's negotiations with the Colonial Office any more successful. He had demanded that that Office cooperate with the C.M.S. in converting Fourah Bay College into a West African University, and in founding a teacher's training college, elementary schools, and a secondary school for girls; that it establish a technical school; that it set up a system of municipal governments which would "give the people real interests in their towns, lead them to take care of them, and make them self-reliant"; that communications within the colony be improved and steps taken to survey its natural resources "and open new sources of wealth to the people"; finally, that qualified West Indians be brought in to take the place of Europeans "whose frequent return home on account of failing health hinder the progress of the colony".[114] Of all these demands action was taken only on that for a University; on 1 February 1876 Fourah Bay College became affiliated to Durham University.

This failure to win sympathy in England for much of their programme was bound to contribute greatly to the collapse of the cause of the Africans. For any conceivable success which they might have won, depended almost wholly on the cooperation of the C.M.S. and the British Government. The formulation of Venn's native pastorate policy and the

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[113] C.M.S. CA1/024, Petition by Native Pastors to Secs. of C.M.S., 7 April 1874.

[114] C.O. 879/8, Johnson to Kimberley, 21 Jan. 1874.

recommendation of the 1865 Parliamentary Committee, together with Pope-Hennessy's vigorous endorsement of it had led Africans to believe that British aid to promote African advancement would have been forthcoming. But from the start the implementation of the religious policy was far from vigorous and with Venn's death was unlikely ever to become so. The British had made no attempt to implement the recommendations of the 1865 Committee. Nor was it likely to embark on an ambitious programme of educational and economic development in Sierra Leone after the expensive Ashanti War of 1873-74. Moreover, Blyden's own return to Liberia and the transfer of Johnson to Lagos robbed the movement for African assertion of any dynamism it ever possessed. The attempt of a few educated Africans led by Blyden to foster an ethnocentric movement concerned with the welfare of the whole race led to few immediate tangible results,[115] but historically speaking, it marked the beginning of cultural nationalism in West Africa. For the rest of the century this was to be the most characteristic form of African assertion - provoked by European belief in African inferiority and the worthlessness of African culture, and more particularly by increased European missionary bigotry and intolerance in their dealings with Africans.[116]

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[115] The converting of Fourah Bay into a University College has already been mentioned. In 1874 the parent committee of the C.M.S. resumed handing over churches to the Native Pastorate, and this certainly was as a result of the controversy.

[116] In the early 1890's a very serious dispute arose in the Niger Mission between Africans and Europeans in which Blyden and Johnson again played a prominent part. This is discussed in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Four

BLYDEN: RACE AND NEW WORLD NEGRO EMIGRATION TO AFRICA.

"The history of the world is the history of race. It is this deficiency in Liberia which makes her so lamentably behind hand."[1] This statement made by Blyden to Coppinger in a letter of 7 January 1873 can be taken as marking an important new development in his thinking: he was now completely convinced that only "pure Negroes" from the New World should be permitted to participate in the enormous and all-important task of regenerating a continent and elevating a race: he now held with unshakeable conviction that mulattoes were not Negroes and were a hindrance rather than a help to the Negro race. This highly significant conclusion of Blyden was foreshadowed as early as 1862. Chagrined that the schemes for American Negro emigration to Africa were called off with the outbreak of the American Civil War, he had pungently ascribed this to "the bitter and unrelenting opposition... from a few half-white men, who glorying in their honorable pedigree, have set themselves up as representatives and leaders of the coloured people of this country, and who have not faith in negro ability to stand alone..."[2]

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[1] Blyden to Coppinger, 7 Jan. 1873, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 16, Pt. 1.

[2] Edward W. Blyden, "An Address Before the Maine Colonization Society", New York Colonization Journal, XII (July 1862).

Blyden was wrong in supposing that the influence of mulatto leaders had reversed the feeling of American Negroes for emigration; an adequate explanation would be that both black and brown Americans would gladly stay in the United States so long as they had hopes of exercising their rights as citizens. But Blyden did discern, correctly, that leadership of the Negro race lay, for the most part, with mulattoes, and that further, within the conveniently designated "American Negro" world there were divisions based to a large extent on colour - with the blacks forming the proletariat - and latent antagonism between them and their somewhat more privileged lighter-skinned "brothers". Blyden had seen that pattern duplicated in Liberia with unwholesome results for the Republic. His experiences in Sierra Leone had shown him that the original Creole element - who were for the most part of mixed blood - were lukewarm in causes which were intended to promote the interest of the race. With this evidence, Blyden came to the plausible but mistaken conclusion that there was a direct correlation between the purity of one's blood and the strength of one's "race instincts".

Ironically, in formulating his own concept of race, he was undoubtedly influenced by the vociferous and mostly anti-Negro currents of ideas on race as enunciated by the American colonizationists and upholders of slavery; by the English School of Anthropology led by James Hunt[3] and Richard Burton[4]; and by the writings of the Frenchman

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[3] See James Hunt, On the Negro's Place in History (London, 1863).

[4] As early as 1866 Blyden protested that "It is difficult to appreciate the taste of the Burtons and Hunts of Anthropological notoriety, and of ... Mr. [S. W.] Baker [explorer of the Nile] in their continual thrusts at the Negro". Blyden, From West Africa to Palestine, 61.

Count Arthur de Gobineau.[5] Briefly, and in sum, the main ideas in these writings on race were as follows: there was a hierarchy of race with the Negro at the bottom, a view that was later "scientifically" reinforced by the exponents of social Darwinism; there were "innate and permanent differences in the moral and mental endowments" of races: each race had its own inherent and peculiar "talents", "instincts" and "energy", and that environmental factors were of very little importance in determining its history; that there existed "an instinctive antipathy among races", that miscegenation was "unnatural", and that mulattoes were "immoral" and weak people with "confused instincts".[6] Blyden was also influenced by the writings of such European nationalists and philosophers as Herder, Fichte, Hegel and Mazzini, who averred that every people had its special mission - a mission which constituted its nationality. Blyden subscribed completely to all but two of the main ideas on race mentioned above: he denied that there was any "absolute or essential superiority or... inferiority among races": each race was equal but distinct: "it was a question of difference of endowments and difference of destiny";[7] in addition, although he believed strongly in the innate attributes of race, he allowed that environmental and circumstantial factors could influence the history of a people. Blyden's own concept of race de-

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[5]Count Arthur de Gobineau, The Moral and Intellectual Diversity, (Philadelphia, 1856).

[6]Hunt, On the Negro's Place in Nature, 34.

[7]Edward W. Blyden, "Africa and the Africans", Fraser's Magazine, XVIII (Aug. 1878), 191.

monstrated his skill in drawing on the main currents of ideas and synthesizing them in such a way as to serve his own purpose: it provided theoretical justification for New World Negro colonization in Africa while keeping mulattoes out; it permitted him to vindicate his own race by showing that environmental circumstances had prevented it in the past from "shaking the world", and finally, it was intended for use as a lever of action in the future. Especially did he stress that each race had its own unique and peculiar contribution to make to world civilization. Or in his own words "In the music of the universe each shall give a different sound, but necessary to the grand symphony". He believed that as yet there were "several sounds not yet brought out, and the feeblest of all that hitherto produced was by the Negro".[8] It was Blyden's goal that the sound of the Negro should be heard loud and clear.

If Blyden held the firm conviction that a new and desirable personality for the Negro race could only be developed in Africa and New World Negroes were an indispensable instrument in its development, he believed with no less certitude that mulattoes were a hindering influence and should be kept out of Africa. From the mid-years of the 1860's he maintained in correspondence with his American friends that Liberia was a Negro Republic and that mulattoes were not to be sent there. One such letter to a member of the Board of the New York Colonization Society, showing the high rate of mortality among mulattoes as

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[8]Blyden, "Africa and the Africans", op.cit., 191.

compared with Negroes in Liberia, was "scientific" enough for Professor Joseph Henry, the first President of the Smithsonian Institute to publish it in his annual report of 1870.[9] Between 1874 and 1895, Blyden was to visit the United States five times, and on each occasion he was in some way concerned with promoting emigration to Africa: his problem was how to get only genuine Negroes to go.

Blyden made his third ever visit to the United States in mid-May1874, and in at least one speech, delivered at Hampton Institute, Virginia, informed his audience that there was a difference between the Negro and the mulatto.[10] It is interesting to note, too, that in 1874 his attitude to white discrimination against Negroes in the United States contrasted sharply with that which he held in 1862: no longer did he fulminate against such discrimination; he now accepted it as "natural". Thus, when he was refused accommodation at a hotel in Hampton even though he was known to be the guest of General O. O. Howard, a white benefactor of Negroes and Principal of Hampton Institute, he accepted this without protest. Of the incident, he laterremarked: "I recognized the necessity under the circumstances: Two races so distinct in natural characteristics and ultimate destiny cannot blend without injury to both".[11] He spent only one month in the United States

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[9]Blyden, "On Mixed Races in Africa", Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institute (1870), 386-388.

[10]Blyden to Coppinger, 21 Oct. 1875, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 17.

[11]Blyden to J. C. Lowrie, 17 Dec. 1875, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 10.

during which, beside his visit to Hampton, he lectured to students at Howard, Lincoln and Harvard Universities. At Howard, he was awarded an honorary M.A., and at Lincoln, an honorary doctor of laws.

Shortly after his return to Liberia, Blyden set out to persuade the American Colonization Society that, as a matter of policy, it should help only "genuine Negroes" to return to Liberia. It was in a long letter dated 19 October 1874, that he first made a direct appeal to the Secretary of the American Colonization Society to exclude mulattoes. He told of his experience of the mulatto in the United States:

> "The European side of his nature appears in his social affectation. I found generally ... that the Negroes were indifferent to mixed schools and some opposed to it, but the mulatto thought it was a natural and inalienable right for which he was bound to contend: and so he confuses the instinct of his black brother, who while anxious to stand upon his race individuality and independence is harassed by the mulatto who is always restless and dissatisfied."[12]

He charged that mulattoes thought themselves superior to Negroes and formed themselves into cliques. He instanced Howard University, where, he claimed, "Negro and mulatto Professors rarely mixed socially off campus." He further charged that "in all the Negro's trouble in the South, he is led on by his bumptious half or one-fourth brother". He claimed that the mulatto was also a trouble-maker in Liberia and

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[12]Blyden to Coppinger, 19 Oct. 1874, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 17.

pleaded passionately for his exclusion from the Republic:

> "You are planting here a nest of vipers who hate the country and the race. Do save us from this inundation. They keep feeble all the time and manage to get into leading positions where they only draw money and do nothing. They oppose all interior openings and do not disguise the most impetuous contempt for the natives except in their public speeches for foreign consumption."[13]

He argued that in the days of slavery, the Society could not exercise a choice about the kind of emigrants it could send to Liberia. But this was no longer so, it was essential for the welfare of the Negro race that a new policy be implemented.

> "However opposed it may have been to the past policy of your country to distinguish between the half-breed and the pure Negro... you cannot hope or expect to build up in this country (Liberia) a Negro government without bearing in mind the influence of race characteristics and tendencies. The mulatto, conceived as a general thing in violation of all moral and social laws, has brought to the Negro race nothing but physical degeneracy and mental and moral obliquity. This is a serious matter and the American Colonization Society, as philanthropists dealing with a question which affects the future of millions should deal cautiously and philosophically with it."[14]

Blyden alluded to this question in almost every subsequent letter he wrote to Coppinger.

Blyden's insistent warnings were actuated by the fact that from the mid-1870's to the end of the nineteenth century a large scale emigration of coloured emigrants always seemed imminent. For the promise

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[13] Blyden to Coppinger, 19 Oct. 1874, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 17.

[14] Ibid.

of full rights of citizenship which the early years of the Reconstruction had held out to the Negro was not fulfilled. The white South was determined to make a pariah of the Negro, and discovered that it did not have much to fear from the North. At first Southerners were content to strike stealthily. Just one month after the passage of the first of the Reconstruction Acts the Ku Klux Klan, a secret organization which was to become the great dread of the Negro, was formed. Other secret societies soon proliferated. After a while, this operation to reduce Negroes again to impotence became open, and helped by Northern connivance, grew into one of the most ruthless operations in all American history. By 1871, the white South, for all practical purposes, had regained its lost powers and privileges; correspondingly, Negroes were being terrorized out of their rights.[15] Nor could Negroes any longer expect help from the North: it had grown weary of crusading on their behalf, and was becoming more and more concerned with establishing a modus vivendi with the white South. This purely pragmatic approach climaxed in February 1877, when Rutherford B. Hayes came to an agreement with white representatives of the South which was to secure his election as President in return for the withdrawal of Federal troops from the South. The "Negro Betrayal" had taken place; and Southern Negroes were doomed to lose their recently acquired rights and privileges.

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[15]Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 338.

As could have been predicted, the number of Negroes wanting to emigrate again rose sharply as the white South perpetrated its systematic terrorization. By 1875, the number wanting to emigrate had reached a considerable proportion, and Coppinger, embarrassed by the shortage of the Society's funds, wanted to know whether the Liberian Government could share the cost of transporting and settling emigrants.[16] The Liberian Government was not able to, and so the Society could send only small numbers of emigrants, some of them paying part of their expenses.

By 1877, the number of Negroes wanting to emigrate had surpassed pre-civil war proportions. Coppinger wrote to Blyden that "scarcely a state but has one or more organizations for removal to Liberia, while the 'Exodus Association' of Charleston, S.C., claim to have sixty thousand ready for passage, and the Colonization Council of Shreveport, Louisiana, reports sixty-nine thousand men and women who wished to be colonized".[17] Many of these organizations were acting independently of the American Colonization Society. For instance, the Liberian Exodus Company of Charleston, Carolina, was formed not only for sending emigrants to Africa, but also for trading between Negro America and West Africa,[18] Acting as Secretary of the Company was Martin R. Delany,

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[16] Coppinger to Blyden, 12 Sept. 1875, Coppinger Letter-Books, Vol,16.

[17] Ibid. For more evidence of Negro feeling for emigration see African Repository, Lll (April 1876), 37; Llll (April 1877), 37-38, and (October, 1877), 115; LIV (Jan. 1878), 29 and (April 1878), 35.

[18] For the best account see George Brown Tindall, South Carolina Negroes 1877-1900 (Columbia, 1952), Chapter 8: "The Liberian Exodus", 153-168.

who, after abandoning his plans to emigrate to the Niger in 1862, had served in the Union army as a Major, and later as an agent of the Freedman's Bureau and School Principal in Charleston South Carolina. With the tables turned once more on American Negroes, he was again planning to leave for Africa.[19] In 1878, the Company bought the barque "Azor" which was consecrated at an impressive ceremony at which Delany and Henry M. Turner, a new champion of American Negro emigration to Africa, were present.[20] The "Azor" left on its first trip for Liberia on 21 April with two hundred and six emigrants. Unfortunately, the promoters did not take elementary precautions to safeguard the health of the emigrants and twenty-three died at sea. No other trip was undertaken: the company itself collapsed in 1879 partly as a result of its own mismanagement, partly through the harrassment and duplicity of Charleston whites, who were opposed to Negroes returning to Africa because it meant a loss to them of cheap labour.[21]

Blyden received this news of a renewed interest in emigration to Africa without enthusiasm. He knew that any such major emigration to that continent would bring with it a large number of mulattoes, and

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[19] Delany to Coppinger, 18 Aug. 1880, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 240.

[20] Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, 160.

[21] Ibid., 156,157.

he maintained that this would have been calamitous. When the news reached him that the Liberia Exodus Company had failed he remarked with relief that this was "a blessing to Liberia": the Republic "wanted no rubbish".[22] He wanted the conduct of Negro emigration to Liberia left solely to the American Colonization Society, whose policy he could influence through his close friendship with Coppinger.

Although the Society had not been sending large number of emigrants, Blyden was pleased that Coppinger had been making an effort to send "the right sort". In a letter of 28 October 1876, Coppinger unofficially endorsed Blyden's views on race when he wrote telling him that the emigrants sent on the last expedition were "very generally Negroes".[23] The significance of this was not lost upon Blyden, who replied:

> "Upon this fact, almost the first on record in the history of emigration to this country, I must congratulate the Republic of Liberia and the continent of Africa... It is to small, unnoticed beginnings of this nature that great events owe their origins."[24]

And the following year when Coppinger pointed out to him that a company of seventy sent out by the Society were "almost without exception blacks",[25]

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[22]Blyden to Coppinger, 20 Nov. 1879, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 2.

[23]Coppinger to Blyden, 28 Oct. 1876, Coppinger Letter-Books, Vol. 17.

[24]Blyden to Coppinger, Mar. 1877, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 1.

[25]Coppinger to Blyden, 22 July 1878, Coppinger Letter-Books, Vol. 19.

Blyden was again quick to express his approval: "I am glad that you have now concluded to send out only such persons whose interest and feelings will be thoroughly identified with Africa and the race, and who will have no means of hankering after fathers who spurned them...."[26] So long as the American Colonization Society attempted earnestly to comply with his demand that only "pure Negroes" be sent to Liberia, Blyden regarded it as the most important single agency working for the regeneration of Africa.[27]

But with the desire for emigration among American Negroes once more growing strongly, Blyden was in constant dread that they would take action independent of the American Colonization Society which would result in large numbers of mulattoes emigrating to Africa. Thus, in 1878 the Negroes and mulattoes of Kansas, many of whom had originally fled from the South, seemed anxious to emigrate to Liberia and sent out two commissioners, Dr. A. L. Stanford and Charles H. Hicks to investigate the suitability of the Negro Republic.[28] But before the commissioners could return, about one hundred of them, led by Richard Newton, found their way to New York in their endeavour to get to Liberia.

Blyden first heard of the Kansas refugees from a Times report while he was in London, England, on his way to the United States on

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[26]Blyden to Coppinger, 31 Aug. 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, pt. 2.

[27]Ibid.

[28]African Repository, LVI (July 1880), 68.

business as President elect of Liberia College.[29] He arrived in New York on 10 May and was relieved to find that they were "suitable" emigrants. He was pleased, too, to see that Henry Highland Garnet, "a Prince among his people", was again actively favouring emigration, and had been the mentor of the refugees while they were in New York. Blyden, of course, warned the migrants of "mulatto machinations" and "did not fail to point out to them the difference between such men as Garnet, inspired and guided by self-sustaining consciousness of ultimate success in the Fatherland, and [mulatto] doubters and traducers..."[30] Blyden was able to persuade Edwin R.A. Seligman, the New York banker and literary figure, whose guest he had been, to donate a hundred dollars towards buying agricultural equipments for the Kansas refugees.[31] On Sunday, 16th May, he preached to a large audience in Garnet's church, and "set New York Negroes thinking" when he impressed upon the Kansas migrants the high responsibility which awaited them in Liberia and the need to remember that mulattoes had no genuine interest in Africa.[32]

This, Blyden's fifth visit to the United States lasted two and a half months and provided further evidence of his detestation of mulattoes. At Madison, Wisconsin, where was held the, as yet, "largest

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[29] Blyden to Coppinger, 11 May 1880, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 239; see also Times, 15 April, p.4.

[30] Blyden to Coppinger, 11 May 1880, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 239.

[31] "The Diary of a Liberian in America", The Monrovia Observer, 111 (14 Oct. 1880).

[32] Blyden to Coppinger, 14 June, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 239.

and most distinguished" Presbyterian Assembly, Blyden delivered a brilliant address on "Africa's Service to the World", before a "select and intellectual audience", including Hon. W.E.Smith, Governor of Wisconsin, and Professors from the State University. This address was enthusiastically received; his old friend, Rev. John Knox, whom he had met again after thirty years, thought it the best delivered at the Assembly.[33] But Blyden's enjoyment of the conference was marred by the presence there of three mulatto delegates. He complained to Coppinger that

> "there were three black delegates out of six coloured from the South - and the three blacks were anxious to go to Africa and will go - the three mulattoes said that they would not go without plenty of money to pay their way back if they wished to return and when I was to preach before the Assembly the three mulattoes contrived to find engagements somewhere else and did not come to hear the sermon - the three blacks were glad to come and felt proud that I was to be heard on Africa by the leading men of the Assembly. Several other things occurred at the Assembly which showed a marked difference between the two classes - and I did not fail to point out the difference to the blacks."[34]

During a two days' stay in Chicago, Blyden met "nearly all the leading coloured men" who were in the city for the Republican Convention, and grudgingly accepted an invitation to dine with them. Among them were Frederick Douglass, Blanche Kilso Bruce, a United States Senator from Missouri during the Reconstruction; James Milton Turner,

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[33]The Journal of Rev. John P. Knox, cited in Holden, The Story of Blyden.

[34]Blyden to Coppinger, 10 June 1880, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 239.

the first United States Minister to Liberia; and Dr. Robert Purvis, leader of the Pennsylvania Negroes. It was Blyden's first meeting with all of them but Turner. He reported being well-received by this "mongrel tribe", but with the exception of Douglass whom he found "splendid in conversation when he chose to let himself out", he was unimpressed: he declared them "as light and empty as men professing to lead a race could well be".[35] Blyden felt compensated in meeting Robert B. Elliot, the young and brilliant Negro scholar and politician from South Carolina, and sought to persuade him to "give his time and person to Africa". In Philadelphia Blyden made the acquaintance of Benjamin Tucker Tanner, an influential mulatto bishop of the African Methodist Church, and editor of the widely circulated weekly newspaper, Christian Advocate, through which he expressed uncompromising opposition to Negro colonization in Africa. Blyden regarded him as a fine example of a man of mixed blood who used his influence to hinder the progress of Negroes.[36]

In Washington, where there was probably the largest concentration of the coloured élite in the United States, Blyden again met several mulatto leaders. He actually came to think well of a few of them, but was careful to attribute whatever excellence they possessed to their Negro blood. Of Douglass he noted:

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[35] "The Diary of a Liberian in America", Monrovia Observer, 111 (26 Oct. 1880).

[36] Ibid.

> "He shows polish of society and the culture of extensive reading. He is strongly Negro, although of mixed blood. His genius and power come evidently from the African side of his nature. He reminds me in his manner and bearing more of some aristocratic African chief such as I have seen in the distant interior, rather than of any cultivated European I have ever seen."[37]

Blyden was also impressed with Henry M. Turner, who had recently been made an A.M.E. bishop. Like other American Negro leaders Turner had confidently hoped that the post civil-war period would bring substantial improvement in the status of the Negro. During the war he had been commissioned as the first Negro chaplain. After the war he entered politics in Georgia and was elected to the House of Representatives in 1868. But like other coloured politicians in the South he was pressured out of active politics. Turner became convinced that the South was determined to again subjugate the Negro, and as early as 1874, he became an advocate of Negro emigration to Africa, and a supporter of the American Colonization Society.[38] In 1876 he was elected as one of the first two Negro Vice-Presidents of the Society.[39] Of him Blyden noted that despite "his light complexion, ... his hair is ... unmistakeably African - his instincts strongly of the race: and he has all the peculiarities of an uncontaminated Eboe".[40] Other mulattoes

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[37]"Diary of a Liberian America", Monrovia Observer, 111 (11 Nov. 1880).

[38]African Repository, Ll (April 1875), 39.

[39]African Repository, Lll (July 1876), 84-86.

[40]"The Diary of a Liberian in America", Monrovia Observer, 111 (9 Dec. 1880).

with whom Blyden had an easy social intercourse were the following non-emigrationists: Rev. Francis Grimke, influential pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, attended by "the colored aristocracy of Washington"; Richard T. Greener, the first coloured graduate of Harvard, and Dean of the Law School at Howard University; James Wormley, the intelligent and energetic owner of Wormley Hotel, "the home of the leading members of Congress", and where Blyden himself stayed; and John W. Cromwell, historian of the Negro, and editor of the People's Advocate. In Washington Blyden had also seen much of two Negro leaders, R. B. Elliot, whom he reported as being "decided in favour of emigration to Liberia", and Alexander Crummell, who had apparently "not given up the idea of returning to Liberia".[41]

Determined as Blyden was to prevent mulatto emigration to Africa, he could not express his viewpoint openly: the American Colonization Society through which he worked would not permit him to express views it regarded as highly impolitic. But it is certain that his public utterances with regard to Africa were directed only to Negroes "pure and simple". His message to American Negroes was contained in two lectures: "Africa's Service to the World" and "Echoes From Africa" which he delivered in the various cities he visited. In both of these he sought to excite the pride of American Negroes in the past of the race in Africa as well as the New World. To his American Negro audience he repeated

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[41] "The Diary of a Liberian in America", Monrovia Observer, 111 (9 Dec. 1880).

his contention that Negroes participated prominently in early Egyptian history and thus were partly responsible for building the cradle of civilization and providing mankind with the essence of all the arts and sciences. In addition, Blyden averred, the great religions of the world - Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, although originating outside of Africa, received protection and consolidation on that continent.[42] Blyden attempted to dispel the image of the African as barbaric, savage and superstitious; they were, in fact, a highly religious people, he claimed:

> "There is not a tribe on the continent of Africa, in spite of the almost universal opinion to the contrary, in spite of the fetishes and greegrees which many of them are supposed to worship, there is not, I say, a single tribe which does not stretch out its hand to the Great Creator. There is not one who does not recognise the Supreme Being.... They believe that the heaven and the earth, the sun, moon, and stars, which they behold, were created by an Almighty personal Agent, who is also their own Maker and Sovereign, and they render to him such worship as their untutored intellects can conceive.... There are no atheists or agnostics among them."[43]

If it is now generally recognised by interested scholars that tribal Africans possess a religion and a philosophy of their own,[44] Blyden's claim in 1880 might well have appeared to his audience dubious and chauvinistic. But so convinced was he of the religious nature of the African that he conceived that, with Europe and the Americas worshipping

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[42] Edward W. Blyden, "Africa's Service to the World", Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 131.

[43] Ibid., 132.

[44] Probably the most ambitious work done in this field so far is Placide Tempels, La Philosophie Bantoue (Paris, 1949).

the god of materialism, "Africa may well become the spiritual conservatory of the world".[45]

They, too - the Negroes of the New World - had made an outstanding contribution to civilization and ought to be proud of it. He gave his audiences a flattering estimate of that contribution:

> "He who writes the history of modern civilisation will be culpably negligent if he omits to observe and to describe the black stream of humanity, which has poured into America from the heart of the Soudan. That stream has fertilised half the Western continent. It has created commerce and influenced its progress. It has affected culture and morality... and had been the means of transforming European colonies into a great nationality. Nor can it be denied that the material development of England was aided greatly by means of this same dark stream. By means of Negro labour, sugar and tobacco were produced; by means of sugar and tobacco British commerce was increased; by means of increased commerce the arts of culture and refinement were developed.[46] The rapid growth and unparallelled prosperity of Lancashire are, in part, owing to the cotton supply of the Southern States, which would not have risen to such importance without the labour of the African."[47]

And if this assessment of their historical importance was new to American Negroes, it was nonetheless, a legitimate one.

In view of his estimate of Negro contribution to modern civilization, it was not surprising that Blyden should "enter his earnest protest"against the use by Caucasians of such derogatory terms as 'the

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[45] Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 143.

[46] For an elaboration of this thesis by a twentieth-century scholar, see Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (Chapel Hill, 1938).

[47] Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 136/137.

despised race' and 'the dark continent' when referring to the Negro and Africa. The irony of it, Blyden skilfully contended, was that it was the Caucasian who had played the despicable role in history:

> "The intelligent Negro feels that the part of the oppressor is not less to be despised than the part of the oppressed - that the part of the man-seller is far more contemptible than the part of the man stolen and sold...[48] History, then, as is read by the thinking Negro, will not diminish the vehemence of his protest against the injustice of being regarded by the European as belonging to a "despised race', nor lessen the grounds of his desire to reciprocate the disparaging sentiment. His hands are free from the blood of other men. He has not in any way oppressed other races. He has suffered and <u>that is all</u>. He has been scattered and peeled, despoiled and plundered, abused, persecuted, and down-trodden, and <u>that is all</u>."[49]

Blyden sought seriously to interest Negroes in Africa. They were not, he warned them, to be side-tracked from the goal of emigration to Africa by temporary advantages which "the exigences of party politics" might dictate. They were to remember, he predicted, that they would never be accepted as an integral part of American society. Nor were they to be deceived by "the ceaseless generosity" of white liberals, for, he explained, the attitude of even the most well-meaning of these was ambivalent:

> "Among the phenomena in the relations of the white man to the Negro in the house of bondage, none has been more curious than this: that the white man, under a keen sense of wrong

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[48] Blyden, of course, omits to mention that Africans were equally reprehensible for cooperating with Europeans in selling their fellow-Africans.

[49] Blyden, "Echoes from Africa", <u>Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race</u>, 160/161.

> done to the Negro, will work for him, will suffer for him, will fight for him, will even die for him, but he cannot get rid of a secret contempt for him."[50]

Nor could the advice of white men be taken seriously "in the vital questions of race".

Another reason Blyden gave for a New World Negro return to Africa was that the attempts of various peoples to express their attributes through nation states was one of the marked characteristics of the time. He reported that

> "Within the last thirty years the sentiment of race and nationality has attained wonderful development. Not only have the teachings of thinkers and philosophers set forth the importance of theory, but the deeds of statesmen and patriots have, more or less successfully, demonstrated the practicability of it. The efforts of men like Garibaldi and Cavour in Italy, of Kossuth in Hungary, of Bismarck in Germany, of the Ashantees and the Zulus in Africa have proved the indestructible vitality and tenacity of race. This seems to be the period of race organisation and race consolidation."[51]

Further, Blyden suggested to American Negroes that their return to Africa was inevitable because so decreed by Providence: it was no coincidence that the downfall of American Negro slavery came about at a time when Africa was being rapidly opened up: this to Blyden's flexibly patriotic mind had made the providential intent for an American Negro "repatriation" clear beyond doubt. Blyden assured them that Africa was their real home, a place where nothing would hinder them

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[50] Blyden, "Echoes from Africa", Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 153.

[51] Ibid., 140.

from fully developing their potentialities:

> "The exiled Negro... has a home in Africa. Africa is his, if he will. He may not ignore it. He may consider that he is divested of any right to it; but this will not alter his relations to that country, or impair the integrity of his title. He may be content to fight against the fearful odds in this country; but he is the proprietor of a vast domain. He is entitled to a whole continent by his constitution and antecedents .... [52] Every man, woman and child of the Negro race out of Africa ought to thank God for his glorious heritage; and hasten to possess it - a field for the physical, moral and spiritual development of the Negro, where he will live under the influence of his freshest inspiration; where, with the simple shield of faith in God and in his race, and with the sword of the spirit of progress, he will grow and thrive; where with his sympathetic heart, he will catch stray, far-off tones, inaudible to the foreigner, which, penetrating through the local air, will waken chords in his nature now unknown to the world, and unsuspected even by himself. He will come under the influence of powers which will haunt him with strange visions, and indicate the way he should go."[53]

Blyden had hoped that the United States Government would undertake to colonize American Negroes in Africa. While in Washington, accompanied by the United States Minister to Liberia, John H. Smyth, he had had several interviews with top American politicians and officials, including President Rutherford B. Hayes, and his private Secretary, Colonel W. K. Rogers; William H. Ewarts, the Secretary of State; and Carl Schurz, the Secretary of the Interior; and had pleaded that

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[52] Blyden, "Echoes from Africa", Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 144.

[53] Ibid., 167.

the United States Government take a keener interest in Liberia.[54] No doubt he had raised the question of the United States Government sponsoring and financing American Negro emigration to Africa. At any rate, he pleaded publicly for this:

> "The United States is the only country which, providentially, can do the work which the whole world wants done. Entering on the west coast, through Liberia, she may stretch a chain of colonies of her own citizens through the whole length of the Soudan, from the Niger to the Nile - from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean."[55]

By having the United States Government colonize its black citizens in Africa, Blyden hoped to curtail further European territorial expansion on that continent. Until the Negro exodus took place, Blyden urged, Negro churches should "increase their efficiency and even develop their central strength by taking a wider, deeper, and more practical interest in the land of their fathers, in their kith and kin".[56]

Anticipating a mass Negro exodus to Africa, Blyden painted a romantic picture of the results:

> "In visions of the future, I behold those beautiful hills, the banks of those charming streams, the verdant plains and flowery fields, the salubrious highlands in primeval innocence and glory, and those fertile districts watered everywhere.... I see them all taken possession of by the

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[54] "The Diary of a Liberian in America", Monrovia Observer, 111 (11 Nov. 1880); also Blyden to Coppinger, 19 June 1880, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 239 .

[55] Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 148.

[56] Ibid., 171.

> returning exiles from the West, trained for the work of rebuilding waste places under severe discipline and hard bondage. I see, too, their brethren hastening to welcome them from the slopes of the Niger, and from its lovely valleys - from a sequestered nook, and from palmy plain - Mohammedans and pagans, chiefs and people, all coming to catch the inspiration the exiles have brought - to share in the borrowed jewels they have imported, and to march hand in hand with their returned brethren towards the sunrise for the regeneration of a continent. And under their united labour, I see the land rapidly reclaimed - raised from the slumber of the whole world...."[57]

Although possessing a "conservative manner of address", Blyden was an effective and evocative speaker, able to stir his audiences: for instance, after hearing one of his sermons on Africa, a Negro clergyman, the Rev. H. C. Cook, who had hitherto strongly opposed American Negro colonization in Africa, felt "like going through the land and preaching in its favour".[58] Undoubtedly, Blyden had helped to keep alive the spirit of emigration among the Negro audiences to which he had lectured, and had also helped to create this feeling; and yet he had hardly affected actual Negro emigration to Liberia.

As President of Liberia College, Blyden returned to the United States in July 1882, mainly for the purpose of promoting the interest of the College, and while there to act as travelling agent of the American Colonization Society in the "great work of colonization".[59] He

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[57]Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 148.

[58]Blyden to Coppinger, 21 June 1880, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 239.

[59]Coppinger to Blyden, 5 April 1882, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 23.

spent nine months in the United States - his longest uninterrupted stay - during which, for the first time, he travelled and lectured in the deep South. In the two years which had elapsed since his last visit to the United States, the situation of non-whites had not changed. In his inaugural address of 1881, President Garfield had promised that there would be "no middle ground for the negro between slavery and equal citizenship"[60] but he had died early in office and so his promise had never been put to the test. His successor, President Arthur, had adopted a policy of accommodation to the white South,[61] and with this connivance it had continued its systematic subjugation of Negroes, and they had continued to react by migrating or talking of emigration.

The pattern of Blyden's activities was the same as in the previous one: lectures to both black and white in North and South to dispel their "astonishing ignorance of Liberia",[62] and induce their co-operative effort at sending the Negro back to Africa; as before, he could hardly hide his dislike for mulattoes. During his first five weeks, spent in New York, he suffered from bronchial infection and had to curtail his public engagements. His stay was further aggravated by

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[60] Quoted in Rayford W. Logan, The Negro in American Life and Thought; The Nadir, 1877-1901 (New York, 1954), 38.

[61] Ibid., 44-47.

[62] Blyden to Coppinger, 19 Aug. 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 248.

the fact that he lived among mulattoes. He complained to Coppinger of having to put up with "empty... bumptious ... impudent and prejudiced mulattoes" at Porter's hotel, as the only black man there.[63] So irritated was he that he wished to return to Liberia but remained only in order to "make some effort on behalf of my people in bondage here and of our fatherland".[64] In Philadelphia, he made an appeal for five hundred thousand Negroes for Africa in Tanner's Christian Recorder. In Boston he spoke of the American Negro as the instrument of Africa's regeneration.[65] In Cleveland, Ohio, he addressed the annual meeting of the American Missionary Society, presenting Liberia "fully and squarely" and trying to "kill the old abolitionist opposition to colonization".[66] Blyden's tour of the South, starting in early November, lasted about six weeks. It consisted mainly of visiting Negro institutions of higher learning in an attempt to persuade Negro students interested in working in Africa to get their training "on the spot" at Liberia College.

Blyden's most important public statement on this visit was his address: "The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization"[67] given in

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[63] Blyden to Coppinger, 28 July 1882, Ibid. Non-white public accommodations seemed to have been owned mainly by mulattoes.

[64] Blyden to Coppinger, 20 Sept. 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 248 .

[65] African Repository, LX (Jan. 1884), 1-12.

[66] Coppinger to Blyden, 31 July 1882, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 24.

[67] Edward W. Blyden, The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization (Washington, 1883), 1-22; see also Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 108-130.

Washington, D.C., on 4 January 1883 at the sixty-sixth anniversary of the American Colonization Society. Where before it had been customary to have "two or three distinguished speakers ... occupy the evening", Blyden was allotted the entire time.[68] His main concern was with arousing public support for Negro emigration to Liberia. He began by pointing out that the establishment of a Negro nation which had been moderately successful, and which could yet grow into a great nation, was sufficient vindication of the work of the American Colonization Society. He argued that the strategy of all Negro leaders should be to bring about mass Negro emigration to Africa; it was the only "statesmanlike" thing to do. Bishop Turner - a vociferous advocate of American Negro emigration to Africa - was one of a very few Negro leaders who had seen the correct solution to the problem of the American Negro, he suggested. He predicted that as the Negro masses became educated they would grow impatient with their circumscribed lives, and must then feel an irrepressible desire to "return to the Fatherland".

> "The Negro youth - as a result of the training which he is now generously receiving in schools - will seek to construct states. He will aspire after feats of statesmanship and Africa will be the field to which he will look for the realization of his desires."[69]

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[68] Coppinger to Blyden, 18 Oct. 1882, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 24.

[69] Blyden, The Origin and Purpose of African Colonization, 15.

In an oblique attack on mulattoes, he deprecated the "general practice among superficial politicians and colored journalists to ignore the craving for the fatherland among American Negroes"; he averred that it was neither "indispensable" nor desirable" that all six million coloured Americans should go: he estimated that one-tenth (which was roughly the precentage of the "pure Negro" population)[70] would suffice to accomplish the task to be done in Africa. In a passage of pathos and romance, he assured that

> "There are Negroes enough in this country to join in the return - descendants of Africa enough, who are faithful to the instincts of the race, and who realize their duty to the fatherland. I rejoice to know that here where the teachings of generations have been to disparage the race, there are many who are faithful, there are men and women who will go, who have a restless sense of homelessness which will never be appeased until they stand in the great land where their forefathers lived; until they catch the glimpses of the old sun, and moon and stars, which still shine in their pristine brilliancy upon that vast domain; until from the deck of the ship which bears them back home they see visions of the hills rising from the white margin of the continent, and listen to the breaking music of the waves - the exhilarating laughter of the sea as it dashes against the beach."

He was hopeful that this would happen in his own lifetime:

> "It may be our happiness to see those rise up who will formulate progress for Africa - embody the ideas which will reduce our social and political life to order; and we may, before we die, thank God ... that the Negro has grasped with a clear knowledge his meaning in the world's vast life - in politics, in science, in religion."[71]

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[70] Melville J. Herskovits, The Anthropometry of the American Negro (New York, 1930), 177.

[71] Blyden, Origin and Purpose of African Colonization, 18.

Blyden expressed his disappointment that, despite frequent petitions from Negroes themselves and from the American Colonization Society, the United States Government had refused to undertake the colonization of Negroes in Africa. He felt that the time had come when "an earnest and united effort should be made by all sections of this great country" to persuade the United States Government to do so. Alternatively, the American public could give its support directly to the American Colonization Society; to his mind there was "no philanthropic institution before the American public that has more just and reasonable claims upon private and official benevolence than the American Colonization Society".[72] But as yet there was no evidence to suggest that either the American public or the United States Government would ever support Negro emigration to Africa.

Five months after Blyden left the United States, a thunderbolt at least as shattering as the Fugitive Slave Bill or the Dred Scott Decision was hurled at Negroes when the Supreme Court declared as unconstitutional the Civil Rights Act of 1875. That Act had specifically been passed to prevent discrimination against Negroes in public places; thus the new decision had, in effect, given legal sanction to segregation. Once again Negroes howled their protests throughout the land at national and local conventions.

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[72]Blyden, Origin and Purpose of African Colonization, 22.

Blyden had no sympathy with this outcry. Indeed, he approved of every discriminatory measure against the American Negro in the hope that this would drive him to Africa. He expressed this view to Coppinger in 1886:

> "I think that God who has His hands both upon Africa and America will deepen the prejudice against the Negro in the United States. He will continue to harden Pharoah's heart, until the oppressed shall be driven from the house of bondage, as Israel was from Egypt, to do his work in the land of his fathers."[73]

Almost jubilantly, he watched the South, encouraged by the repeal of the Civil Rights Act, pass new discriminatory measures against the Negro. When in 1887 a bill was passed in the Georgia Legislature making "the co-education of white and colored races" a penal offence, Blyden expressed his strong approval of this measure to Coppinger. He wrote:

> "Had I been in that legislature, I should have voted ex-animo for the bill. All lovers of humanity must rejoice in its passage.... I hope that the law will be rigidly enforced in Georgia and throughout the South, then Africa will get back her children, as is evidently God's design."[74]

In a later letter he added that the Georgia Bill was "one of the most important supplementary measures adopted since the abolition of slavery",[75] that is, as far as his ultimate goal of getting the American Negro to emigrate to Africa was concerned. Blyden also approved, with

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[73] Blyden to Coppinger, 22 June 1886, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 23, Pt. 1.

[74] Blyden to Coppinger, 29 Aug. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 2.

[75] Blyden to Coppinger, 12 Sept. 1887. Ibid.

reservation, the Alabama Criminal Code which forbade intermarriage or fornication between white and non-white: he wanted it extended to forbid marriage or fornication between "genuine Negroes" and "half-castes". "I feel as many of the white leaders of public opinion in the South on their side of the question - that in Africa and the African work, the marriage of a genuine Negro with a mulatto or quadroon is ipso facto null and void,"[76] he wrote bitterly to Coppinger.

The new discriminatory measures which Southern state legislatures began passing against the Negro in the 1880's, and which was perfected in the next decade, had caused the talk about emigration to rise to a crescendo with Bishop Turner hitting the highest notes of stridency. But as before, neither Turner nor any other Negro leader could capitalize on this feeling, and overcoming all obstacles, turn it into a creative historic force by organizing a major back-to-Africa movement. As always, this discussion about emigration brought a cleavage in coloured American society: there were those leaders who were totally opposed to any Negro emigration abroad, while there were those who, while opposing the idea of a mass exodus to Africa as either undesirable or impractical, favoured the emigration of select groups who had no illusions about the challenge which Africa presented; Bishop Turner remained alone in still wishing all non-white Americans with Negro blood to return to Africa. These divisions reflected themselves in the press:

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[76] Blyden to Coppinger, 3 Dec. 1888, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 25, Pt. 2.

as a general rule, mulatto opinion was opposed to emigration to Africa; Negro editors tended to be sympathetic to selective Negro emigration, while not necessarily endorsing a mass exodus.[77] After the Berlin Conference, which signalised the beginning of the partition of Africa, the anti-emigrationist editors claimed tirelessly that American Negroes emigrating to Africa would be making a great sacrifice to exchange one form of despotism for another. Blyden did not agree that the European partition of Africa in any way altered the case for the American Negro return to that continent: Liberia could settle thousands of them; in addition, he maintained that European powers - temporary agents in Africa[78] - would regard westernized Negroes as assets in their colonies.[79] From the evidence of mulatto opposition to emigration to Africa, Blyden hopefully but wrongly predicted that "there will be two camps formed in America before long - a mulatto and a Negro camp - the one favouring and the other opposing colonization to Africa".[80]

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[77] African Repository, LXIV (July 1888), 97.

[78] For a discussion of Blyden's view of European nations in Africa, see Chapter Six.

[79] Edward W. Blyden, The African Problem... (London, 1890), 23. This view was probably not well-founded. Blyden himself had unsuccessfully urged the British to arrange for American Negro emigration to their African colonies (see Chapter Six). It seems clear that the British (and presumably the other European Powers) were against any major emigration of westernized Negroes to their colonies for fear that these might spearhead a revolt against European rule.

[80] Blyden to Coppinger, 29 Aug. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 2.

In the meantime Blyden urged the American Colonization Society "to have a definite Negro policy for a definite Negro work in Africa".[81] In the past he had been content to have the Society merely act out a policy of sending only Negroes to Liberia, now he was urging that such a policy should be openly proclaimed: he wanted the word "Negro" substituted for the word "colored" in the second article of the Constitution of the Society, to make it publicly clear that in future it would colonize only "pure Negroes" in Africa.[82] But the Society continued to be loathe to publicly endorse Blyden's views on race and colonization: in the minds of the benefactors of the Society there was no distinction between the Negro and the mulatto, and for the Society to have openly proclaimed such a distinction would have been for it to alienate much of its support.

However, in 1888 Blyden came close to having the Society officially endorse his views. In a letter of 30 March, Coppinger reported to Blyden that "half-breed" editors had increased their attacks on the Society and requested him to counter.[83] Glad of this opportunity, Blyden wrote a long article entitled "The Two Voices" - the one Negro, the other mulatto- which was published as an editorial in the July issue of the

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[81] Blyden to Coppinger, 19 Nov. 1887, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 24, pt. 2.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Coppinger to Blyden, 14 March 1888, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 30.

Repository. For the first time the mulatto-Negro conflict was reflected in the pages of the Repository; the article required justification:

> "We have noticed from time to time... attacks on our work, which have appeared uncalled for and gratuitous.... In view of the increasing importance of the African question and the stand which the genuine Negroes are taking in behalf of their Fatherland, we deem it necessary to point out the aspirations and utterances of the genuine Negro and those of the persons allied both to the Negro and to the Indian or to the Negro and the white man,"[84]

The article went on to prove its point by quoting from the editorials of newspapers with both Negro and mulatto editors. It ended by promising that in future "greater care would be exercised in selecting among numerous applicants for patronage - to see that none shall avail themselves of our aid to get to Africa who are seeking that country 'as the man condemned to be hanged chooses the penitentiary, or the excruciating sufferer chooses death'".[85] That quotation had come from the anti-emigrationist Christian Recorder which was edited by a quadroon.

Coppinger admitted to Blyden that the publication of the "Two Voices" in the Repository had committed the Society to a policy of sending only Negroes to Liberia.[86] Blyden applauded what he called

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[84] African Repository, LXIV (July 1888), 97.

[85] Ibid., 104.

[86] Coppinger to Blyden 30 March 1888, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 30.

"the new policy" of the Society.[87] In fact, for some years now, the Society had sent out only those emigrants who did not have an obvious admixture of Caucasian or Indian blood. But, even so, it was impossible to avoid sending some emigrants who did not meet Blyden's uncompromising racial standards. This, Coppinger pointed out to him in a frank outburst in 1891 which amounted to a censure of the Liberian:

> "I am heartily with you in your cry of Africa for the Africans.... I carry this principle in action as far as emigration was concerned.... [But] There is much of the impracticable and the impossible in your demand. The emigrants often go in families and communities. To eliminate those with "white reenforcements" ... would be to stop all emigration, for there are mighty few families offering for Liberia, who are all, father, mother, and children, pure blacks."[88]

Blyden's article had caused quite "a roar" in the mulatto press.[89] Typical of the reaction was the following excerpt from an editorial in the South Western, whose editor was of French and Negro extraction: "The man that seeks to propagate the doctrines set forth in the Repository's 'Two Voices' is a dangerous enemy who threatens the peace and welfare of four fifths of the Negro families of this land and inspires father and mother to rise against their children, brothers and sisters, and husband and wives, to rise against each other".[90] This

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[87] Blyden to C.T.O. King, 8 Aug. 1888, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 25, Pt. 2.

[88] Coppinger to Blyden, 13 June 1891, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 34.

[89] Coppinger to Blyden, 11 Oct. 1888, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 30.

[90] Quoted in Blyden to Coppinger, 1 Oct. 1888, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 25, Pt. 2.

fair comment Blyden glibly set down as "mongrel insincerity"; it showed that his programme for a return of "pure Negroes" only to Africa was hardly practicable.

But, as yet, nothing would convince Blyden that a "black Moses" would not still rise to lead an exodus from America to Africa. He gave Coppinger a description of what such a leader would be like:

> "The Negro leader of the exodus, who will succeed will be a Negro of the Negroes, like Moses, was a Hebrew of the Hebrews - even if brought up in Pharoah's palace he will be found - No half-Hebrew and half-Egyptian will do the work - he will have brass and assurance enough - for this work, heart, soul, and faith are needed."[91]

Blyden's prediction was almost fulfilled in the remarkable career of that extraordinary Jamaican Negro, Marcus Garvey. Although Garvey himself was a "pure Negro" and with as strong a race pride as Blyden, unlike the latter, he did not insist that only "pure Negroes" were qualified to return to Africa.

But if by the mid eighteen eighties Blyden was still hopeful that a Negro exodus would take place, his views on the role that American Negroes were to play in Africa underwent a marked change: earlier he had held the view that in the task of the regeneration of Africa, westernized Negroes would provide both the stimulus and the leadership, but now, while he still believed that New World Negroes had an important role in Africa using the skills they had learned, he was firmly of the opinion that the leadership of the race in Africa must come from native

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[91] Blyden to Coppinger, 3 Oct. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 2.

Africans themselves. One of his most explicit statements on this point was in a letter to Coppinger dated 1 October 1888:

> "The American Negro has his place in the work of Africa's regeneration - an important place; but he is incompetent to lead the work of the race on this continent. He has been too demoralized by his oppression of two hundred years to lead; but he will furnish indispensable material aid in the work of constructing a nation on civilized principles... although not according to the form in every respect which he has seen in the land of his exile. But he will be forever striving to reproduce the form which he has left behind, and he will be forever blundering and failing. The trained aborigine must take the lead to give the superstructure - the form which the untrammelled and unimpaired genius of the race will suggest and dictate."[92]

Blyden had come to this conclusion partly because of his disappointment that educated "pure" Negroes had not responded to Africa in the way that he had hoped and predicted that they would, partly because when they did go to Liberia, they too, like their lighter-skinned "brothers" scorned the natives. He had especially been disillusioned by J. H. Smyth, the first "pure Negro" who had been appointed as United States Minister to Liberia. Initially, he and Smyth had worked closely together, but later Blyden charged that Smyth's zeal for him (Blyden) and the Republic had waned.[93] After this, Blyden peevishly came to the conclusion that "there was no Negro in America yet fitted for a high diplomatic position".[94]

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[92] Blyden to Coppinger, 1 Oct. 1888, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 25, Pt. 2.

[93] Blyden to Coppinger, 18 Sept. 1883, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 21, Pt. 1.

[94] Ibid.

With this belief, he recommended to the executive committee of the American Colonization Society, who were often consulted by the United States Government in matters pertaining to Liberia, that, as yet, only white men should be appointed as United States Minister to Liberia. He gave as his reason that "an American Negro cannot be an impartial and prudent representative of the American Government" in Liberia. A white man would be a steadying power - a Negro or coloured man a dividing influence.[95] Blyden insisted that it was of the greatest importance to have appointed "a well-trained and statesmanlike official" (he didn't think an American Negro could be such) as U.S. Minister to Liberia; in such a case, "the American Government, without contravening the Monroe doctrine, might exert an important influence in West and Central Africa".[96]

But Blyden's request was politically impossible of fulfilment: traditionally, the positions of U.S. Ministers to Haiti and Liberia were given to Negroes or coloured men; it was a form of political patronage. The executive committee of the Society was aware of this and had to reject Blyden's recommendation. In September 1885, President Cleveland appointed Moses A. Hopkins to replace Smyth as Minister to Liberia. Coppinger reported to Blyden that the Society "had taken no part in the hot contest for the office", but commended Hopkins as

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[95]Blyden to Coppinger, 2 May 1884, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 21, Pt. 1.

[96]Blyden to Coppinger, 15 Aug. 1885, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 22, Pt. 2.

being "Negro in blood and instincts".[97] Blyden consoled himself that if it was obligatory upon the President to appoint a Negro", then he had made the best choice: he had "steered clear of the corrupt Negro politician on the one hand, and the conceited literary character on the other".[98] Besides, he had met the "black and comely" Hopkins on his visits to the United States in 1874 and 1880 and had thought well of him. But after Hopkins' early death in office, Blyden persisted in asking Coppinger to have the Society use its influence to have a white man appointed to the vacant position.[99]

Blyden, then, had strangely concluded that educated (but uncultured, he would claim), Negroes, for the most part, like mulattoes were unfit for work in Africa. And, paradoxically, this led him to agree with Southern racists who were opposed to the higher education for Negroes. He felt that for the task in Africa those Negroes who aspired after a higher education should receive it in Liberia. He confided these thoughts to Coppinger:

> "If I were a white man ... I should oppose, seeing clearly the possibilities and the actualities of the Negro in America - and his possibilities in Africa ... the erecting of costly buildings and the establishment of elaborate machinery for his literary education. I should abolish Lincoln,

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[97]Coppinger to Blyden, 19 Sept. 1885, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 27.

[98]Blyden to Coppinger, 2 Oct. 1885, Ibid.

[99]Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Aug. 1886, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 23, Pt. 2.

> Howard and Fiske Universities and other similar pretensions, and would establish elementary schools, with every possible appliances for their industrial and technical training. I should use the money for the promotion of wide anddeep culture in Africa in the Republic of Liberia where circumstances will give practicality and reality to such education."[100]

Blyden was aware how unpopular such a view would be in Negro America, yet he insisted that it was a "true" one: "I suppose if I were now in America and the Negroes knew these were my views they would stone me - the whole multitude would be prepared to use this method of opposition - but it is nonetheless true - only long residence and work and study by the Negro in Africa can bring him to this conclusion". He regretted that his view "would not be understood for a long time outside the Colonization ranks by friends of Africa, and even within those ranks in a very narrow circle". [101]

Blyden's favourite emigrant had become the black man who combined great physical strength with "industrial know-how". And it was this kind of emigrant, albeit in small numbers, that was embarking from the Society's ships. Some Liberians were not above describing the emigrants as "woefully inferior Negroes". But Blyden was prepared to defend them: he wrote to Coppinger:

> "Please continue to send 'these woefully inferior Negroes'. They have in them the germ of the African nationality. The

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[100] Blyden to Coppinger, 22 June 1886, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 23, Pt. 1.

[101] Ibid.

> law of progress is written in their nature. Never mind the absence of book learning. If they have the physique and the agricultural and mechanical information they will build the intellectual and political structure."[102]

Blyden's next visit to the United States was in 1889. In the interim he had established his reputation as the foremost Negro scholar by the publication in 1887 of his magnum opus, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, a work "written chiefly with a view of instructing Negro youth in Christian lands eager to study the history, character and destiny of their race".[103] The book was well-received in the American press; the Negro press was particularly enthusiastic: the A.M.E. Church Review wrote of Blyden as "The one Negro of standing in the English world of recognised scholarship";[104] the Southern Recorder (Atlanta, Georgia) was even more enthusiastic:

> "We pronounce the work not only the most learned production that ever emanated from a black man, but one of the most learned in the English language.... It is a book for the leaders of the race, and such others who desire to see the true inwardness of the Negro and his country. The work will be an authority in the higher literary circles for ages to come."[105]

Typical of the reviews in the white press was that which appeared in the Nation (New York):

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[102] Blyden to Coppinger, 2 Sept. 1887, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 2.

[103] Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, see preface to second edition.

[104] Blyden, African Problem and Other Discourses, see inside of the back cover.

[105] Ibid.

> "That he (Blyden) is not deficient in the rarer qualities of thorough and patient study, some of the papers in the book... give abundant testimony. They show broad reading, minute investigation, a surprising mental alertness...."[106]

In the interim, too, Blyden had made himself more controversial than ever: in December 1886 he had resigned as a minister of the Presbyterian Church in protest against the intolerance of sectarian Christianity.[107] He himself had remained a non-denominational Christian but because of his strong endorsement of Islam in his book, it was widely but wrongly reported in the American press that he had become a Mohammedan. His American friends were perturbed. Coppinger reminded him that "The Christian world has neither respect nor patience with anyone raised and educated in the Christian faith who turns Mohammedan or who becomes the friend or apologist of Islamism".[108] To Blyden such a reaction was proof that even the most well-meaning of white friends did not understand the problem of the Negro, did not appreciate the pressing necessity for the race to elevate itself no matter what the instrument used. Blyden, the Negro nationalists, was interested in beneficial, practical results: and to his mind, Mohammedanism had proved itself superior to Christianity in West Africa, while in the New World

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[106] Blyden, African Problam and Other Discourses , see inside of the back cover.

[107] Blyden to Coppinger, 25 Jan. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 1.

[108] Coppinger to Blyden, 10 June 1887, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 29.

Christianity was associated with the degradation of the Negro.[109] It is noteworthy that in his stay in the United States in 1889/1890 he gave, for the first time, several lectures on the Koran and Islam in West Africa, without himself admitting to be a Mohammedan, or advocating that religion to American Negroes. With his enhanced literary reputation, would he be more effective in bringing about an implementation of his solution to the Negro problem? It was not to be.

Blyden had been invited by the American Colonization Society to work as its agent, the invitation being prompted by the fact that applications had been more "numerous and urgent" than ever before.[110] The Society was making another attempt to revive public interest in its work, and Blyden's task was to act as its travelling agent publicizing the fact that the Society was still an active agent, and collecting subscriptions on its behalf. Leaving Monrovia on 16 May he arrived in the United States on 2 August after a short stay in England.

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[109] Blyden's lauding of Islam brings to mind the present-day Black Muslim sect whose reaction to white American Society was in some ways similar to his: Negro separation from the dominant white society - the Black Muslims setting themselves the impractical goal of an independent Negro nation within the geographic boundaries of the United States of America - and the recognition that Christianity has been used as a tool to oppress Negroes. However, I have seen no evidence to suggest that there is a connection between Blyden's lauding of Islam to American Negroes and the rise of the Black Muslims - who did not come on to the American stage until the early 1930's. One significant difference between the pan-Negro nationalism of Blyden, and the nationalism of the black Muslims is that the former was a humane, non-vindictive one, while the latter is a bitter one preaching black supremacy. There are two major studies of the Black Muslims: C. Eric Lincoln, The Black Muslims in America (Boston, 1961); and E. V. Essien-Udom, Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America (New York, 1962).

[110] Coppinger to Blyden, 26 Jan. and 3 May 1889, Coppinger Letter-Book, Vol. 31.

He spent the first three months in the large cities of the North, and once again he was disappointed to find that Northern whites were, for the most part, unaware of the feeling for emigration on the part of Southern Negroes, and of the continued existence of the American Colonization Society.[111] He hoped by bringing the plight of Southern Negroes to the attention of Northern whites to win support for Negro emigration to Africa. As part of his campaign he sent out letters to influential white Northerners pleading for their support for the American Colonization Society.[112]

But the most important part of his mission lay in the South. He began his tour of the South in Charleston, South Carolina, on 29 November. Here he was told what he already knew - the desire of Southern Negroes to emigrate. His host, Rev. J. S. Lee of the A.M.E. Church, informed him that "if he were authorized to do so, he could at short notice have thousands of Negroes ready to embark for Africa".[113] Another Negro minister knew "that more than 500,000 Negroes are ready to leave the South for Africa if they had the opportunity to go". Blyden himself reported that emigration had the support of the leading Negroes

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[111] Blyden to Coppinger, 4 Nov. 1889, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 247.

[112] Lagos Weekly Record, IV (4 July 1894).

[113] Blyden to Coppinger, 29 Nov. 1889, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 247.

of Charleston. Among these was Randall G. George, a "genuine Negro" and "the richest coloured man in the state" who wanted to see his people assisted to "get home to the land of his Fathers".[114] George had promised to lead South Carolina Negroes back to Liberia if Congress appropriated a grant of money for that purpose. Blyden reported, too, that the Charleston Recorder, a Negro newspaper which referred to him as "the Gamaliel of the race", fully supported Negro emigration to Africa.[115]

Blyden found in South Carolina and in other parts of the South much white support for Negro repatriation. This in itself represented a marked change in the attitude of the South to non-white migration and emigration and can be explained in terms of federal politics. The Democratic victory in the presidential election of 1884 had had the effect of reviving Republican interest in non-whites of the South. In the election of 1888 they had been especially wooed and had been promised that their personal rights and liberties would be secured.[116] As a gesture towards this end, President Harrison proposed in his annual message of 1889 to persuade Congress to pass a law providing for the

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[114] Blyden to Coppinger, 20 December 1889, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 247. cf. Tindall, South Carolina Negroes, 128.

[115] Blyden to Coppinger, 10 December, 1889, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 247.

[116] Logan, The Negro in American Life and Thought, 53.

supervision of federal elections. The passage and execution of such a law would have greatly revived the political power of the Negro in the South. It was the fear of this which had prompted some white Southern politicians to favour emigration of non-whites from the South. It is significant that, on 12 December 1889, Senator M. C. Butler of South Carolina introduced a bill in Congress "to provide for the migration of persons of color from the Southern states".[117] In this he was ardently supported by Senator Morgan from Alabama. But if some Southern politicians found it to their interest to have Negroes and mulattoes leave the South, the overwhelming majority of them were opposed to this removal through federal finance; they remained supremely confident in their ability to curb and control non-whites. The state of Mississippi had shown how this could be done. Reacting swiftly to Harrison's threat to provide federal supervision of elections, Mississippi revised its constitution in 1890 "for the express purpose of disenfranchising most Negroes while permitting most whites to vote".[118] Nor was white Southern fear well founded: the Lodge Bill which was to provide for federal supervision of elections was buried in the House of Representatives.

But if Southern whites still refused to countenance federal support for Negro emigration they were more sympathetic than before to the idea

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[117] Logan, The Negro in American Life and Thought, 135.

[118] Loc. cit.

of non-governmental arrangement for this purpose. Thus, as soon as Blyden arrived in Charleston, he won the support of influential whites for his scheme for Negro colonization in Africa. Among the first to endorse his views and aid in their dissemination were the editors of both Charleston daily newspapers: shortly after his arrival, a reporter from the Charleston World sought him out and assured him "that the white people would interpose no objection to enterprising Negroes going where they would better their conditions"; and Blyden found that the views of Major J. C. Hemphill, editor of the Charleston News and Courier, coincided with his own:

> "My opinion is, that there can be no satisfactory solution of the race problem while the races remain together. I am in favour of Wade Hampton's[119] proposition that fifty million dollars should be appropriated to assist Negroes who are willing to leave the State, and I think we owe something to the Negroes, and we should help them to go who want to go."[120]

Hemphill placed his newspaper completely at the disposal of Blyden who wrote several editorials in it urging a Negro return to Africa and white support for this movement.

Blyden had alienated the mulattoes as easily as he had won the confidence of whites. On his arrival a delegation of the leading coloured men had called upon him and he had shown a marked partiality for the black members. In addition, he had turned down an invitation

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[119] Wade Hampton was a former Governor of South Carolina and a Senator from that State.

[120] Quoted in Blyden to Coppinger, 29 Nov. 1889, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 247.

of the African Methodist Church to attend a conference at Columbia, South Carolina, because he knew that it was going to be composed mainly of mulattoes and he could not "cast pearls before swine".[121] These and other signs that he could not tolerate mulattoes led to the charge that he had come to divide the coloured population.[122] But the first open and direct attack on him came from Charles H. J. Taylor, ex-minister to Liberia, who in an article in the Atlanta Constitution of 1 December, reprinted in the Charleston World of 2 December, charged that Blyden's attempt to promote Negro emigration to Liberia was "devilish". Taylor disparagingly referred to Liberia as "that black land of snakes, centipedes, fever, miasma, ignorance, poverty, superstition and death" and advised that a law should be passed "to place in the penitentiary for ten years anyone who would by word or act invite or encourage individuals to leave" the United States for the Negro Republic.[123] He further charged, falsely, that Blyden himself, because of his misdemeanours there, could not return to Liberia. He followed up this attack with a further assault on Blyden and the American Colonization Society in a fifty-two-page booklet.[124] In addition, he challenged Blyden to a public debate, but the

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[121] Blyden to Coppinger, 10 Dec. 1889, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 247.

[122] Blyden to Coppinger, 29 Nov. 1889, Ibid.

[123] Charleston World, 2 Dec. 1889, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 247, No. 176.

[124] Charles H. J. Taylor, Whites and Blacks or the Question Settled (Atlanta, 1889).

Negro scholar ignored this averring that "the matter was too serious for frivolous controversy".[125] The Charleston World, however, was interested in Blyden's reaction to Taylor's remarks and the Liberian described them as typical of the venomous dislike of mulattoes for Africa but requested that his view be not made public. The request was ignored. The appearance of the story in the Charleston World served further to widen the rift between Blyden and the local leaders of mixed blood. But despite the controversy which Blyden had engendered so soon after his arrival in Charleston, or perhaps partly because of it, the public meetings which he held attracted large audiences.

From Charleston he visited Aiken where he attended the twenty-sixth session of the South Carolina Conference of the A.M.E.Church, presided over by Bishop Benjamin W. Arnett of Ohio, and composed "chiefly of Negroes" among whom were Rev. J. L. Coppin, editor of the A.M.E. Review, and S. J. Campbell, a native of Liberia and Superintendent of the A.M.E. Church there.[126] Blyden was flatteringly welcomed; to add to his pleasure, he found that the Conference was responsive to his plea for a greater Negro missionary effort in Africa.[127]

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[125] Blyden to Coppinger, 3 Dec. 1889, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 247.

[126] Sierra Leone Weekly News, VI (1 March 1890).

[127] Blyden to Coppinger, 20 Dec. 1889, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 247.

On leaving Aiken, he returned to Charleston.

Blyden was pleased with the result of his visit to South Carolina: "the avenue of my work seems to widen and multiply in this state" he reported to Coppinger. On the eve of his departure from Charleston he was the guest of a Negro organization, the United Labour Association, which assured him that three hundred thousand were ready for emigration to Africa but could not leave because of difficulty in disposing of their property.[128] Before he left that Southern city, too, Major Hemphill gave him letters of introduction to editors of four of the leading newspapers of the South: The Jacksonville Times-Union, the New Orleans Picayune, the Times-Democrat and the Mobile Register.

From Charleston Blyden left for Jacksonville and while travelling Jim Crow on the train from Savannah took the opportunity to speak to the "sturdy workmen" with whom he mingled on the "advantages" of emigrating to Africa. In Jacksonville he was the guest of Square English, the wealthiest Negro of that city. Here, as at Charleston, the whites received him enthusiastically. He wrote to Coppinger:

> "The white people here have been kind to me. Several heard my first lecture and endorsed it. The editor of Times-Union, son of a slave-holder ... made a speech commending my lecture in the most enthusiastic terms. It was moved that the audience express their appreciation of my lecture by a rising vote - everyone rose. I have never had anywhere a more flattering endorsement of my utterances. On the following evening two of the white citizens paid me a complimentary visit and offered

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[128] Blyden to Coppinger, 10 Dec. 1889, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 247.

> to serve me in any way in their power. Next day I was invited to meet some of the leading white men at the Times-Union office, where they urged me to visit every city in the South and lecture. They say they had never before seen so wise, natural and satisfactory a solution of the race problem before them. They asked me if I had money to travel or if I was collecting money. I told them I had enough to travel on. They urged me to return to Jacksonville later in the season as they would like to give me a better reception and make a contribution towards my labour."[129]

The Times-Union had referred to Blyden as "the heaven-appointed medium for helping to solve the (Negro) problem"; it appraised that his visit was worth "millions to the South".[130]

Blyden next visited the town of St. Augustine where "the leading white men welcomed ... him and thanked him for his utterances as they read them in the Times-Union". His visit to Jacksonville and St. Augustine marked the end of Blyden's tour of the South. It was prematurely ended so that he could fulfil his speaking engagements in the North.

Blyden's visit to the South achieved nothing; he seemed to have lacked a definite sense of purpose: having won the sympathy of influential whites for the idea of Negro "repatriation to Africa", it was strange that he did not attempt to organize their financial support for the American Colonization Society; far from this, he had, on his own admission, refused proffered financial help. In the South

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[129] Blyden to Coppinger, 28 Dec. 1889, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 247.

[130] Florida Times-Union, 28 Dec. 1889, enc. in Ibid.

was the overwhelming majority of the "coloured population", and here, too, were to be found practically all "genuine Negroes". This tour of the South was really his first attempt to meet the Negro masses, yet he saw fit to curtail his visit for speaking engagements in the North. He had made no attempt to use his obvious influence with Negro leaders either to organize independent schemes for emigration, or get them to give wholehearted support to the American Colonization Society. His paranoic hatred of mulattoes seemed to have precluded him from devising plans which would promote his own goals, and made his general plan almost impracticable.

Equally as puzzling as his tour of the South was his most important recorded pronouncement on this visit to the United States, made as the main speaker at the seventy-third anniversary of the American Colonization Society, held in Washington on 19 January, and at which "some of the statesmen and lawmakers of the land" were present: here Blyden urged the United States Government and the American public to support American Negro colonization in Africa, and yet declared that the time had not yet come for mass Negro emigration to Africa. He began his speech by reporting that

> "Two hundred millions of people have sent me on an errand of invitation to their blood relations here. Their cry is 'Come over and help us'."[131]

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[131] Blyden, The African Problem, 2.

He had found among Negroes an "eager and enthusiastic response" but also discovered that neither the Negro leaders, the general public nor the United States Government were sufficiently prepared to promote Negro emigration to Africa. Again he expressed his disappointment that those - both Negroes and whites - who had fought so earnestly to end slavery could not understand that that was not an end in itself, that they were really releasing agents for the building of a progressive civilization in Africa: to him the "Negro Problem" had three stages: the first ended with emancipation of Negroes during the American Civil War; the second was the education of the Negro masses in preparation for the final stage - emigration to Africa. Again, he expressed his chagrin that "the American Congress...would...begrudge the money required to assist a few hundred thousand Negroes" to carry on the work that Liberia had begun on a grander and more efficient scale.[132]

But Blyden appeared to be undespairing: young Negro leaders would arise who would "catch the spirit of the future, and ... place themselves in accord with it". Similarly, so "statesmanlike" an idea as Negro "repatriation" to Africa must eventually gain currency in the public's mind, and when it did the United States Government would be given the authority to execute the idea. He implied that the sooner Negroes were "repatriated" the better because "the Negro problem was upon the United States and it could no more be ig-

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[132]Blyden, The African Problem, 25.

nored than any of her other vital interests".[133] And yet he went on to state that the time had not yet come for Negro emigration to Africa:

> "But things are not ready for the solution of the third and last phase of the problem. Things are not ready in this country among whites or blacks. The industrial condition of the South is not prepared for it. Things are not yet ready in Africa for a complete exodus. Europe is not yet ready; she thinks that she can take and utilise Africa for her own purposes."[134]

While the statement taken by itself was largely true, yet taken within the context of his whole speech, and of his goal, it was surprising: it annulled his stirring plea for public and government support for American Negro emigration to Africa, and must have puzzled those Negroes whom he might have convinced of the necessity of emigrating to Africa. Significantly, he had never before regarded European partition of Africa as a hindrance to Negro emigration to Africa. This new ambivalence of Blyden can perhaps be explained by his keen disppointment that educated American Negroes had failed to commit themselves to working for Africa's advance. For in a subsequent lecture delivered "in various cities of the United States" he berated Negro leaders for their lack of organization, their want of a plan for the elevation of themselves and their race; he suggested that a demonstration of initiative and earnestness on their part for it would win the support of the American

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[133] Blyden, The African Problem, 32.

[134] loc.cit.

public and Government for the scheme of Negro colonization in Africa:

> "There are thousands of Negroes - young men - growing up in this country with no settled purpose, no well-defined plan. They have no goal set before them which, with all their energies, they strive to reach. There is in their minds no clear and distinct idea toward which they struggle. They merely drift on the current, and are borne by it whithersoever it flows. They are not masters in life but still slave to their surroundings.... Here are muscles and brain and will, which, if transferred to the land of their fathers, might do a great work for themselves and for humanity.... Neither as individuals nor as a community, neither as persons nor as leagues, have they attracted the attention or diverted the minds of the dominant race to an earnest consideration of their needs and desires as a people. No men of ideas and enthusiasm have yet risen among them whose strong convictions could lift them out of their ordinary selves and prepare them to sacrifice all personal, party or class considerations for the sake of the great cause. They, then, do not shake the world."[135]

If then, Blyden failed to use effectively his influence to promote American Negro emigration to Africa, and if, because of the indifference of American Negro leadership, he sometimes lost his enthusiasm and hope for Negro "repatriation", all his thinking and actions were always predicated upon the conviction that emigration to Africa was the only solution to the Negro problem in America, and that a Negro exodus must ultimately come. This was why he was consistently opposed to any organizations whose aim was the betterment of the Negro in the United States. While still on his visit to the United States such an organization was formed: in February 1890, on a call from T. Thomas Fortune, a quadroon who was editor of the New York Freeman, coloured American leaders

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[135] Blyden, The African Problem, 85-86.

met in Chicago and founded the Afro-American League.[136] J. C. Price, a very able Negro who was Principal of Livingstone College, North Carolina, and was widely regarded as a likely successor to Frederick Douglass, as leader of the American Negroes, was elected as President; Fortune was elected Secretary. Blyden's response to this organization was predictable: he commented, trenchantly, that

> "Its real aim is to secure organizations in which lazy and ambitious mulattoes may obtain easy positions of influence and emolument. And also to gather together a crowd of mulattoes who will assume to represent the colored people on the African question."[137]

He predicted that the Afro-American League "could never succeed"; his prediction proved correct: it never became effective and collapsed within a decade.

Less than two years after Blyden left the United States in 1890, the two most devoted white advocates of American Negro colonization in Africa died: in September 1891, John H. B. Latrobe,[138] who first as President of Maryland Colonization Society, and from 1853 as President of the American Colonization Society, had served the cause of colonization for more than fifty years, and five months later, William Coppinger, whose record was even more impressive than that of Latrobe: first as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society,

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[136] T. Thomas Fortune, "The Negro's Place in American Life", The Negro Problem (New York, 1903), 125.

[137] Blyden to Coppinger, 29 Aug. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 249.

[138] See John E. Semmes, John H. B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803-1891 (Baltimore, 1917).

and from 1864 as Secretary and Treasurer of the American Colonization Society, he had fully devoted almost his entire adult life to promoting Negro colonization to Africa.[139] Blyden had long been on terms of friendship with both men, and was particularly close to Coppinger: his friendship with the white colonizationist had extended over forty years, and was of the kind which admitted of free and full expression of views on the part of both men. Coppinger had been sympathetic to Blyden's viewpoint, and while unwilling to adopt publicly ideas of Blyden which he regarded as impolitic, did everything possible to accommodate the Negro patriot. In the last three years before Coppinger's death, the executive committee had made a particularly strenuous effort to revive public support for the Society without substantial success. Yet it was significant and ironic that Coppinger sent out in his last year in office (1891) more emigrants (154) than in any of the previous nineteen years.[140] In the quarter of a century which had elapsed since Blyden first began urging him to send out to Liberia only "pure Negroes", he had selected and sent off 1256 Negroes. The death of Coppinger and Latrobe finally confirmed what had long been evident: that the Society was moribund, and as a private organization would never be an effective instrument for carrying out a Negro exodus from

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[139] Liberia Bulletin No. 1 (Nov. 1892), 1-2.

[140] See P. J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement, 1818-1865 (New York, 1961), Appendix: Table of the Annual Receipts and Colonists Sent to Liberia by the American Colonization Society.

America to Africa.

Succeeding Coppinger as Secretary of the American Colonization Society was J. O. Wilson, a former Superintendent of Schools in Washington, D.C., and a man little known to Blyden. The correspondence which took place between the two men was briefer, less personal and less regular than that between Blyden and Coppinger. Blyden had, of course, acquainted the new Secretary with his views on race and emigration and had found him, too, sympathetic: indeed, Wilson had made out a questionnaire to prospective emigrants in which among other questions asked was: "Are you light or dark colored?".[141] But Wilson, too, pointed out the difficulty of choosing emigrants Blyden considered desirable: what was he to do when prospective emigrants answered that they were "ginger-colored"? Wilson further suggested that, because it was "not possible to get the busy Anglo-Saxon to stop long enough to study the problem of race",[142] it would be impossible to persuade the American public that mulattoes did not belong to the Negro race. But by the mid-1890's the question had become an academic one: with its funds at an all time low, emigration through the Society had all but ceased: between 1893 and the end of the century the Society sent out only seventy-three emigrants. Significantly, too, Blyden's relationship with the American Colonization Society had practically come to an end

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[141] Wilson to Blyden, 6 Oct. 1897, A.C.S.Letter-Books, Vol. 42.

[142] Ibid.

by 1899: between then and his death in 1912, only one letter seemed to have been exchanged between Blyden and the Secretary of the American Colonization Society.

Blyden made a final visit of three months to the United States in 1895, arriving in New York on 20 July. The main purpose of his visit was to do research for a projected history of Liberia rather than to act as an agent of colonization. For now it was clear even to him that no Negro exodus was impending. Perhaps because of this, his message was again an ambivalent one: while he continued to insist that American Negroes must ultimately (his estimate varied from two generations to three hundred years) emigrate to Africa, he was more emphatic than ever that the time had not yet come for a Negro exodus to Africa:

> "The present generation of white men and the present generation of black men must pass away. A new generation of each race, strangers to the abnormal fact of slavery and its monstrous offshoots, must arise before any extensive colonization of American blacks in Africa can answer its purpose. The Negro problem must be solved here or it will appear in Africa in a new form. The Negro must learn to respect himself here before he will be able to perform the functions of true manhood there. Should he leave this country now, harrassed and cowed, broken in spirit and depressed, ashamed of his racial peculiarities and deprecating everything intended for racial preservation, he would be destitute of the tenacity and force, the self-reliance and confidence, the faith in himself and destiny, which.... would guide him in the policy to be adopted toward the man like himself whom he would find on his ancestral continent."[143]

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[143] Edward W. Blyden, "The African Problem", North American Review, CLXI (Sept. 1895), 338.

However, he still thought it desirable that individual Negro missionaries and small colonies should "go out with some definite object in view for the religious or industrial improvement of the country". For the bulk of American Negroes who were to remain behind he counselled that they strive to maintain "peace and harmony" between the two racial groups. He advised them to adopt "a modest temperateness of behaviour - an unpretentious and unambitious deportment....", and to eschew politics as "barren, uninteresting and often perilous".[144] Here again Blyden showed that the visionary in him was stronger than the practical: for clearly the alternative paths of action for American Negroes was to fight manfully for equality in the United States or seek "manhood" in Africa; Blyden's advice was not the advice of a man of action.

And yet his opinions and advice were of especial interest because they were being offered at a time when American Negroes were without a recognized leader. Frederick Douglass, the leader of American Negroes for more than thirty years, had died in Washington, D.C. on 20 February. Price, a man with known sympathies for Africa though not an advocate of a Negro exodus to that continent, who had been widely regarded as Douglass's likely successor, had died prematurely. Among the other leaders there was no one who was the obvious and undisputed successor to Douglass. Who, then, was to be the new leader? Would he favour Negro emigration to Africa? Would he lead a brave new campaign for Negro equality? Or would he, as part of a temporary strategy, seek to

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[144] loc.cit.

appease the whites by foregoing some of the rights of Negroes as American citizens? The answers were not long in coming: on 18 September 1895, the new leader of American Negroes emerged in the person of Booker T. Washington,[145] the Principal of Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, after his now famous Atlanta Address in which he "renounced social equality, at least temporarily, conceded a subordinate position for Southern Negroes in politics, urged education for practical ends of gaining a livelihood and emphasized the necessity for Negroes to cooperate with their Southern white friends".[146] Washington's policy of appeasement had won him the tumultuous applause of the white South, and ironically, secured him the leadership of Negro America: for, there was no formal procedure for electing a Negro leader, and his choice tended to depend as much on the recognition by white America as on the support of Negroes themselves.

Washington's policy was the same advocated by Blyden with one exception: Washington firmly accepted that Negroes were in the United States to stay, while Blyden never gave up hoping that eventually an American Negro exodus to Africa would take place. Both men already knew of the coincidence of their views. Blyden had met the Negro Principal in Washington, D.C., in 1890, through their mutual friend, Francis

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[145] For the most recent and clearest elaboration of Washington's ideas, see August Meier, Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915 (London, 1964).

[146] For an analysis of Washington's entire speech and the national reaction to it, see Logan, The Negro in American Life and Thought, Chapter 14: "The Atlanta Compromise", 314-340.

Grimke. But probably the full discovery by Blyden of the coincidence of their views did not come until the Liberian read an article by Washington in the Southern Workman of October 1894, in which he recommended that Negroes should eschew politics and instead seek to get a good industrial education. On 28 November, he wrote to Washington expressing his agreement with such a policy:

> "The Negro in the Southern States cannot afford to be a politician. By this I mean that it is not in his best interest to be one. I hope I am too far away from the scene for any interested motive to be attributed to me in making that remark. Every thinking African on this side acquainted with the subject entertains the view I have just expressed. We believe that the interests of both races will be served if the Negro will eschew politics and political aspirations where every step of the way is hampered and covered with thorn and briars. He is called to a higher and nobler work. The religious and industrial spheres lie open before him, in the latter of which you have shown ... in your admirable letter his possibilities are unlimited. It is a pity that he should neglect the great work which he is so well fitted to do for and upon the dominant race and for himself to pursue an ignis fatuus which leads him away from rest and peace into all sorts of difficulties and often to death."[147]

Blyden's whole-hearted support of Washington's policy was all the more comforting to the latter in view of the fact that the Liberian admitted, for the first and only time, that for practical purposes the Negro was in the United States to stay. His letter had continued:

> "I believe that while there are and will continue to be intense longings on the part of many in the South for Africa, and while there will be now and then small emigrations to the Fatherland, the time for anything like a general exodus is far distant - perhaps three hundred years off[148] so that

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[147] Blyden to Booker T. Washington, 28 Nov. 1895, in "New York Age", 24 Jan. 1895, A.C.S. Scrap-Book, Vol. 3.

[148] Blyden's estimate of the length of time that would elapse before American Negroes returned to Africa varied: his most frequent estimate was from one to two generations. This is the only occasion on which he had estimated three hundred years.

> practically the Negro is in the United States to stay, and should adjust his relation with the white people upon a basis that will ensure peace, harmony and prosperity, at the same time that he brings his peculiar gifts to the improvement of the situation."

Blyden ended by assuring Washington that he was on "God's line for the race".

Glad of this enthusiastic endorsement by so distinguished a Negro of a policy that was bound to be controversial, Washington ensured that Blyden's letter appeared in print. He had replied to Blyden thus:

> "I am exceedingly grateful for the encouraging manner in which you express yourself concerning the condition and prospects of the Negro in the South.... What you say is so good, and so entirely in keeping with my own views, that I have taken the liberty of asking Mr. (T. Thomas) Fortune, editor of the New York Age, to let it appear."[149]

It was some nine months after this exchange of letters that Washington made his policy of accommodation with Southern whites known to the nation, thereby securing the leadership of the race.

If leaders of the American Negro, including Washington, disagreed sharply with Blyden that the solution to the "race problem" lay in Negro emigration to Africa they were always willing to honour him as an outstanding Negro intellect. In New York in August 1895 he was given "a grand reception at the St. Marks Methodist Church". Some eight hundred Negroes, among whom were some of the most distinguished

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[149] La gos Weekly Record, VI (16 Mar. 1895).

of the country, attended. The New York Age described his reception as "a memorable occasion in the social and intellectual history of Negroes in New York".[150] And just before he left the United States, he was invited to deliver the annual address before the Bethel Historical and Literary Society of Baltimore. This honour was reserved only for highly distinguished Negroes; the year before Douglass had delivered the address. Blyden's name attracted to the lecture "an unrivalled aggregation of Negro talent, wealth and culture".[151] Blyden's final visit to the United States came to a premature end when he was requested by the British Colonial Office to assume an appointment in Lagos.

In curtailing his American visit, he experienced one regret: that he would not be able to attend the first American Congress on Africa, which was scheduled to be held at Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia, from 13 to 15 December. The Congress was sponsored by Stewart Missionary Foundation which was established to stimulate American Negro interest in Africa. He welcomed this as a step in the right direction, and wrote from London, expressing his regret at being unable to attend, but wishing it success:

> "The 'Congress on Africa' at this time is most opportune when the world is looking to that continent as a field for political, commercial and philanthropic effort. I

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[150] Lagos Weekly Record, VII (5 Oct. 1895).

[151] "Washington Post," 14 Oct. 1895, A.C.S. Scrap-Book, Vol. 111.

> hope that the results of the Congress upon the Negro population of your country will be such as to lead them to take a greater practical interest in the land of their fathers."[152]

From 1895 until his death in 1912, Blyden's contact with New World Negroes was through private correspondence or in articles which appeared in the African Methodist Episcopal Review and in the Liberia Bulletin. Throughout this entire period the lot of the Negro in the United States worsened. In state after state in the South he was stripped of his political rights and discriminated against in every way.[153] The result was that this entire period is endemic with race riots; and Negro lynchings, oftentimes with the connivance of the law, were commonplace.[154] If the age of Booker T. Washington saw the Negro make great advance in industrial education, it also saw him reach the nadir of his power in the United States.

But early in the new century there were already signs that the Negro was on his way to a slow painful recovery. A new militant and uncompromising leadership had already begun to emerge, led by the young and brilliant W. E. Du Bois, who challenged Washington's policy

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[152] J. W. Bowen, Addresses and Proceedings of the Congress on Africa (Atlanta, 1896), 16.

[153] Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 328-38; a subsection entitled "The Movement for Disenfranchisement".

[154] Ibid., 431/37: subsection entitled "Patterns of Violence".

of compromise and appeasement.[155] It was the efforts of this group, as well as the shock administered to the liberal white conscience by the dastardly white-incited race riot of Atlanta in December 1906, which led in 1909 to the formation of the white-dominated but interracial National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People - which became the first effective national organization fighting for the rights of Negroes.

All during this time Negroes continued to respond to discrimination by drawing up grandiose plans for emigration to Africa; but as in the previous half century none of these schemes succeeded. The Negro was in the United States to stay. The force of circumstances which had kept them there even when large numbers showed a genuine desire to emigrate, operated even against the efforts of the one charismatic leader in all American Negro history, Marcus A. Garvey, who attempted to lead the Negro masses back to Africa.

In these years Blyden had no new message for the American Negro. Consistently he advised them that it was in their interest to decline to participate in American politics. In 1896, when the movement to disenfranchise the Negro in the South was gaterhing momentum, he wrote a friend John E. Bruce, a distinguished American Negro journalist, that the elimination of the American Negro from politics was "the

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[155] W. E. Du Bois, Souls of Black Folk (Chicago, 1903-, passim.

best thing that could have happened to him in the South".[156] And in 1910, less than two years before his death, he expressed a similar view to another American Negro friend:

> "It seems to me that the Negro in the black belt of the South where you reside, might be the happiest man in the world, if he would only follow the teachings and method of Christ.... He took upon Himself the form of a slave and served humanity from below. He eschewed politics."[157]

Even in the time of their sorriest plight, Blyden felt no sympathy for American Negroes because he believed that their place was in Africa.

In theory, Blyden's case for American Negro return to Africa was a legitimate and strong one. In his lifetime there were very few signs that the Negro would ever achieve equality in the United States, and his prediction that they would never, has so far proved correct. His programme, then, would have solved the "Negro Problem" in America. But, in his view, a far more important result from large-scale Negro "repatriation" would have been the building of progressive but culturally distinctive African states. Blyden could never bear to think that this grand vision of a great African civilization resulting from American Negro stimulus, would never be realized. He had seen the previous three hundred years of Negro history as leading up to the time when Africa, regenerated by her children who had returned from exile, would leap on to the world stage and play an important role: it was

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[156] Blyden to John E. Bruce, 26 Sept. 1896, John E. Bruce Papers.

[157] Blyden to Rev. Edward W. Cooke, March 1910, Ibid.

no accident, but a grand Providential design that Negroes should be taken to the New World and acquire elements of western culture; that design included their return to the fatherland as a leavening influence. Blyden's convenient theocratic determinism was no doubt encouraged by the fact that almost throughout his lifetime there existed the possibility of a substantial American Negro return to Africa. In retrospect it would seem that such an exodus was most likely to take place if it was Government sponsored and financed; and even so, it was likely that the majority of American Negroes would have elected to stay behind. But even if the Government had attempted to carry out Blyden's own scheme, his uncompromising racial qualifications for prospective emigrants, would have made a failure of it. It is doubtful, too, as he himself later came to realize, whether substantial Negro emigration to Africa would have led to the desirable results he anticipated. If the history of Sierra Leone and Liberia were any guide, then it is certain that serious problems of culture contact between emigrants and natives would have arisen, and the whole process prove to be one of mixed blessing. Of course, such difficulties were not insuperable. But in the final analysis, although Blyden's case for American Negro return to Africa was a strong one, supported by historical evidence, although his vision of an Africa resulting from such "repatriation" was a grand one, his insistence that only "pure Negroes" should return had made his scheme an impractical one, and resulted in much mischannelling of his energies.

Chapter Five

BLYDEN: PAN-NEGRO EDUCATOR, DIPLOMAT AND POLITICIAN, 1874-1885.

On leaving Sierra Leone in October 1873, Blyden had returned to Liberia with renewed enthusiasm for educational work in the interior of the Negro Republic, particularly among the Mohammedans. He had been invited back by "the leading Liberians"[1] and he felt optimistic that he could now work more effectively in the Negro Republic than in the British colony. After he had made a preliminary revisit of a few days he wrote hopefully from Sierra Leone to a friend:

> "I am happy to say that during a recent visit which I paid to Liberia, I found the leading men in Church and State quite disposed to give up their adherence to the coast and penetrate the interior as the only hope commercially and politically for the country.... I shall go back soon to help in the work which they now seem willing to prosecute."[2]

But Liberian leaders had invited him back so that they could use his talents in the capital: because he was the only Liberian who could read the communications from all foreign governments as well as Arabic notes from the interior, President Roberts offered him the position of Secretary of State but, having set his heart on

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[1]Blyden to Coppinger, 14 Sept. 1873, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 16, Pt. 1.

[2]Blyden to J. C. Lowrie, 19 Sept. 1873, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 9.

work in the interior, he declined it. Blyden's refusal to cooperate "revived mulatto antipathy" to him, and he soon discovered that the mulatto-Negro conflict which the "Roye Affair" had exacerbated, was still potentially explosive. Of this he reported:

> "Politically, things are wearing a gloomy and threatening aspect. Everybody is dreading some serious outbreak. The oppressions and bloodshed of 1871 unnecessarily enacted, are not yet forgotten; and the party who considered themselves as injured are seeking every opportunity to revenge themselves."[3]

In Monrovia he found that "a spirit of mobocracy" still prevailed; the government was "inefficient and imbecile", and Liberia College was "falling into decay".[4] His arch-enemy, J. J. Roberts was still President of the Republic as well as of Liberia College even though he was "old and feeble", and "took no interest in anything".[5] Blyden's picture of conditions in Monrovia was substantiated by the reports of other Liberians: on 29 September 1874, the Liberian Trustees of Liberia College wrote to Roberts noting that he had not called a faculty meeting since 1871, nor had he held the semi-annual examination for 1874 that was required by the regulations of the College, and requesting him to convene a meeting of the Board of Trustees to discuss "the rapidly declining state of the College";[6] and another Liberian observed

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[3]Blyden to Lowrie, 10 Feb. 1874, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 10.

[4]Blyden to Coppinger, 7 Sept. 1874, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 17.

[5]Blyden to Coppinger, 19 Oct. 1874, Ibid.; also, Blyden to Lowrie, 2 Feb. 1874, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 10.

[6]Liberian Board of Trustees to Roberts, 29 Sept. 1874, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 10.

that "Everything in connection with the College requires remodelling, reconstructing".[7]

This degenerate state of affairs had driven Blyden to his usual admonitions: in a speech in Monrovia on 1 December 1873, he remonstrated with Liberians to

> "show yourselves equal to the responsibilities which devolve upon you. Fail not to use every effort to gain a position of prosperity and happiness for yourselves, and to open to civilization and Christianity the great continent of which you occupy the border; your unsuccess will only deepen the impression that the Negro is indeed an inferior race, and that the Caucasian will feel justified in scorning him as an equal or a brother."[8]

He urged that Liberians should incorporate and amalgamate with the "athletic and vigorous" tribes which lived on the elevated tablelands of the interior: the Mandingoes, the Fulas and the Hausas.

Liberia's continuing failure had caused Blyden to conclude that the Negro Republic "still needed the example and guidance of white men" as missionaries and educators - a strange conclusion for a man who so recently at Sierra Leone had insisted that Negroes should control their own schools and churches. In a long memorandum, entitled "Liberia a Failure", sent to the Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, he recommended that in future American missionary and philanthropic agencies operating in Liberia send out white men to supervise the administration of the work and expenditure of the money because

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[7] J. Dinery to Lowrie, 21 Oct. 1874, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 10.

[8] E. W. Blyden, "Problems Before Liberia", African Repository, L (Aug. 1874), 230.

Liberians so entrusted in the past had "subserved their individual ends without the remotest reference to the public good".[9] He argued that non-resident white men could be assets to Liberia because "not having any desire to become prominent and influential citizens of Liberia... they will consult the welfare of all"; nor would they be "the object of envy" of Liberians. This unwise recommendation of Blyden - and one whose implementation was bound to be unpopular among Liberians - was motivated by his unrelieved hatred and distrust of mulattoes.

His recommendations for effective missionary work in Liberia was more reasonable and practical. He urged upon the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions that each of its missionaries send a report at least once a month "describing the condition of his field, its prospect and wants; also conveying intelligence that may be gathered of the native tribes in his vicinity or interior to his station", which would form a basis for future planning; that teachers in mission schools supply full monthly reports on their classes; that missionaries abstain from becoming "mixed up with political or party questions", as also from trading for profit: all their time should be devoted to "their legitimate work as the religious guides and instructors of the people"; that meetings of the Presbytery in Liberia be held regularly in a central and convenient location to coordinate missionary activities; that clergymen should show evidence "of personal piety and of intellectual ability";

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[9]Blyden to Lowrie, 20 Dec. 1873, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 9.

and the treasurer of the Presbytery send quarterly statements of his accounts with a general survey of the work done.[10] Blyden's recommendations were, in effect, another indictment of missionary work in Liberia; his anxiety to reform the system was based on his belief that missionaries and clergymen could be the most powerful agencies for good in the Negro Republic. Elsewhere, he charged that Liberians were "satisfied with the orgies of an emotional religion without either intellectual apprehension of the truth or practical application of it in their lives", and blamed ill-trained clergymen for encouraging it.[11] He urged the Presbyterian Board to found a Theological College in Liberia to give adequate training to prospective clergymen.[12]

Blyden also wished the Presbyterian Board to found a lay institution of higher learning in the interior, and on his brief visit to the United States in 1874 put forward this proposal.[13] He explained that he could get no help for such a project from the Liberian Government because of the opposition of influential Liberian traders who feared "that if the narrow crevices through which a struggling trade now filters in insignificant drops to them were made wider, the trade would cease to flow, or be distributed into so many channels as to

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[10] Blyden to Lowrie, 20 Dec. 1873, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 9.

[11] Blyden to Lowrie, 23 Jan. 1877, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 11.

[12] Blyden to Lowrie, 1 Oct. 1873, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 9.

[13] Blyden to Lowrie, 28 May 1874, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 10: enc. Memorandum, "Proposals for Interior School".

make their quota proportionally smaller", while the mulattoes believed that "the training and incorporation of natives will lower if not annihilate the prestige which they have so maintained". He sought to persuade the Board that it was its duty to give

> "to Liberia and interior Africa a comprehensive and effective system of education, and for some years to come should devote itself to training minds which in church and State on the coast and in the interior are to control this country."

Blyden offered his services as "one who endeavours to devote his whole heart and life to the glorious enterprise". He saw himself as the head of "the educational centre not only of Liberia but of West Africa" to which "leading natives in the British colonies would send their children to be educated by us; and native chiefs of influence in the interior would avail themselves of the opportunity we hope to offer in Arabic as well as English". Blyden pledged to make such a school "contribute as much as possible to its own support - to give a new direction and cultivate a spirit of self-reliance and self-support" and it was to be conducted "in the simplest manner - conforming to ordinary native usages in clothing and diet to save expense and kill the foolish notion" that the European way of life was best. But despite these assurances, the Presbyterian Board did not undertake to implement Blyden's project, but instead decided to reopen Alexander High School (which had been closed down after Blyden left it to become a Professor at Liberia College) at Harrisburg in the interior on the St. Pauls River.

Blyden returned to Liberia in late August taking with him from Sierra Leone as an assistant teacher a young Mandingo fluent in Arabic "as well as several native languages including Fula and Mandingo".[14]

But so perturbed was Blyden by the lawlessness of Liberia and hence the fear that he might lose his life, so hampered by an uncongenial domestic relationship with his mulatto wife; indeed, so obsessed by his hatred of mulattoes and by their opposition (real and imagined) to him, that he was unable to do any effective work. He began to appear as a man fickle and without fixity of purpose: his desire for work in the interior alternated with a desire to get away from Liberia and work for two or three years in the Southern United States helping to prepare Negroes there for emigration to Africa.[15] He himself was aware of his own unsteadiness of purpose and in an anguished and pathetic outburst attributed it to lack of sympathy from his wife and Liberians generally:

> "I live among an unsympathetic people - and, I regret to say, an unsympathizing family. My wife seems entirely unimproveable. She is of the mind and temperament of the people around her - sometimes, pressed as I am on all sides, I feel like making my escape to the interior and never allowing myself to be heard from again. Domestically speaking, this has been my life for years. My restlessness and my apparent fickleness is largely due to this. I am persecuted <u>outside</u> but more <u>inside</u>. Uncongenial, incompatible, unsympathetic, my wife makes

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[14] Blyden to Lowrie, 9 Sept. 1874, <u>P.B.F.M.Papers</u>, Vol. 10.

[15] Blyden to Lowrie, 17 Sept. 1874, <u>Ibid.</u>; also Blyden to Coppinger, 21 Oct. 1875, <u>A.C.S.Papers</u>, Vol. 17.

the burden of my life sore, very sore and heavy."[16]

Other letters Blyden wrote in this period show him as an utterly frustrated man, poor in health, unable, because of lack of support and his own indecisiveness, to effectively push Liberia's influence into the interior, unwilling to participate in a government controlled by mulattoes, and yet constantly expostulating on mulatto "misgovernment and rapacity". Especially did he castigate the Government for its lack of an enlightened policy towards the natives, and its refusal to consider their grievances. When, in 1874 the sea-board tribes at Cape Palmas formed themselves into the Grebo Reunited Kingdom and for almost two years repulsed the attempts of the Liberian Government to subdue them, Blyden's sympathy lay with the native Africans. He regarded the intervention of an American Man of War which had finally enabled the Liberian Government to overcome the native Africans, as unfortunate, and more than hinted that it would have been to the advantage of the Negro Republic if it was brought under native rule.[17] Blyden consistently maintained, as in the following excerpt from a letter to Coppinger, that native chiefs would gladly have supported the Liberian Government if it had treated them firmly but sympathetically:

> "It is difficult for me to repress the tears in my eyes when I consider what a noble opportunity Liberia has allowed to slip by. Native chiefs of power and widespread

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[16] Blyden to Lowrie, 15 Jan. 1875, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 10.

[17] Blyden to Lowrie, 20 Sept. 1875, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 10; also Blyden to Coppinger, 21 Oct. 1875, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 17.

> influence - such as Marmora of Fishtown or Little Cess - have been entirely under control, to use them as assistant and co-workers in the opening of this country. They long for recognition from the Government of Liberia, and were ready to place their talents at the service of the Republic, but our leaders did not understand their opportunity or the work which devolved upon them. A judicious, firm but sympathetic treatment of these chiefs would have made them powerful auxiliaries to the Republic."[18]

At Harrisburg Blyden was adviser and schoolmaster to all who would listen and learn: he taught manual crafts as well as academic subjects, including Arabic, in day and evening classes, did everything possible to encourage agriculture, and in all, earned the reputation in Monrovia of "raising up a black aristocracy on the St. Pauls river".[19] Occasionally, he visited the capital to deliver a public address: one such occasion was Liberia's Independence celebration in 1876 when he spoke on the "False conception entertained by our leading men as to their position and work here".[20] But he preferred to look interiorwards: he made occasional forays to nearby Mohammedan towns and himself received frequent visits from Mohammedans. In January 1877 he revisited Boporo, and sought to extend Liberia's influence to this Mohammedan centre by urging the American Colonization Society to plant a colony of American Negroes there.[21] Here, on this healthy highland location he yearned to establish "an educational nucleus... that will

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[18]Blyden to Coppinger, 29 June 1876, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 1.

[19]Blyden to Lowrie, 6 Jan. 1877, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 11.

[20]Blyden to Lowrie, 6 Dec. 1876, Ibid.

[21]African Repository, LVIII (July 1877), 91.

attract aspiring youth from various parts of the coast as well as the interior".[22] But this dream was not to be realized.

Blyden's opportunity to serve the Negro Republic in an official capacity came again a few months after his visit to Boporo. Roberts had died on 25 February 1876, less than two months after his retirement from the Presidency. But even with the death of the man he regarded as the great villain in Liberian history,[23] Blyden was no more optimistic of the future of Liberia because he believed that the new President, James S. Payne, himself a former President who had been succeeded by Roye, "belonged to the same school as Roberts".[24] However, Blyden soon found Payne making overtures to him: Payne was anxious to settle the boundary dispute between Liberia and Sierra Leone, and for this purpose wished the Negro scholar to go to England as a Special Minister Plenipotentiary. But because the Liberian Legislature did not regard a diplomatic missinn to England as necessary, and moreover, was opposed to the choice of Blyden, it refused to vote funds to cover its expenses.[25] But anxious to promote friendly relations between Britain and Liberia, Blyden gladly accepted the diplomatic appointment directly from the President although this meant that he would receive no salary or allowance from the Liberian Government. In August 1877, Blyden as-

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[22]Blyden to Lowrie, 6 Dec. 1876, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 11.

[23]Blyden never forgave Roberts. Later he quoted with relish a verse that Martin Freeman was supposed to have composed on Roberts' death:

"Roberts is dead - so I am told
His greatest fault is love of gold
If to heaven he's gone, angels, look sharp
As you may lose a golden harp."

Blyden to Coppinger, 28 April 1888, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 25, Pt. 1.

sumed his duties as Liberian ambassador to the Court of St. James and became the first Liberian to represent his country abroad as a diplomat.

Blyden was no stranger to Britain: he had visited the country six times previously and had already made firm friends in humanitarian, literary and academic circles. Blyden had been especially attracted towards Britain for two main reasons: he was grateful for British humanitarianism towards the Negro and Africa, and he was hopeful that the British Government would take a paternal interest in the English-speaking Negro nation in West Africa. Symptomatic of this gratitude was an ebony walking stick which on his first visit to England he had presented to Lord Brougham as a recognition of his work on behalf of Negroes.[26] Shortly after this first encounter, Blyden expressed his "earnest desire" to write a book on the philanthropic aspects of Brougham's life "as a token of gratitude for eminent services rendered to the Race, and as proof of the many assertions which your Lordship has made as to the capabilities of the African".[27]

Blyden's general aim was to interest prominent Britishers in Liberia and to convince them by his own example that the Negro was

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[24] Blyden to Lowrie, 1 May 1875, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 10.

[25] Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Aug. 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[26] Journal of African Society (11 (1912), 362; also, Blyden to Lord Brougham, 5 Sept. 1863 and 11 June 1866, Brougham Papers.

[27] Blyden to Lord Brougham, 24 May 1861, Ibid. In a debate in the House of Lords on 25 June 1860, Brougham referred to Blyden's first letter to Gladstone and had commented that "a better composed or better reasoned letter was never written", see Parliamentary Debates, CLIX (1860), 926.

capable of the highest intellectual development. In 1866 on his way to Syria, Blyden stayed in England for two and a half weeks and sought out his old acquaintances, Brougham and Gladstone. On 11 June he was the guest of Brougham - "that living wonder" - in the House of Lords, and on the following day through Gladstone's influence was admitted into the Strangers' Galery of the House of Commons.[28] From here he was impressed by the "free colloquial, didactic [and] truly admirable" manner of Gladstone's oratory, as well as "the clear, forcible and commanding eloquence" of Disraeli. In 1869, Blyden, who since 1860 had corresponded irregularly with Gladstone, wrote the new Prime Minister asking him "not to forget my poor country and race in your extensive philanthropic operations".[29]

On a two month visit to England in 1871 after his flight from Liberia, Blyden greatly widened his contact among scholars and clergymen. Through Gladstone he obtained a ticket to read at the British Museum and because of his interest in Arabic manuscripts, soon won the attention of Dr. C. Rieu, Keeper of the Oriental Mss. in the British Museum, and also of Dr. William Wright, Professor of Arabic at Cambridge University, and a former assistant of Rieu at the British Museum.[30] Both these men

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[28]Blyden, From West Africa to Palestine, 46.

[29]Blyden to Gladstone, 11 May 1869, British Museum Add. Mss 44420/255.

[30]Arundell Esdale, The British Museum Library (London, 1946), 131.

were keenly interested in specimens of Arabic literature from West Africa which Blyden had brought with him to England. At the British Museum Blyden also became friendly with Professor Edward Owen, Superintendent of Natural History, who acquired the works of the Negro scholar for the Museum's library.[31] In ecclesiastical circles Blyden had made the acquaintance of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, the affable, liberal and influential Dean of Westminster,[32] through whom he met such outstanding clerics as Dr. James Fraser, Bishop of Manchester; Dr. William Thomson, Bishop of York; Dr. Frederick Temple, Bishop of Exeter; and Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, a biographer, and "chaplain in ordinary" to Queen Victoria.[33] Blyden was also introduced to top London Presbyterian circles.

On his way from the United States in 1874, Blyden spent two weeks in England, and his growing acquaintance with the British intellectual world can be gauged by his statement to Coppinger that he thought he might "be able to do a little to enlist some of the leading scholars of England, including Mr. Gladstone, ... on the side of improved method in dealing with Africa".[34] In an address he gave on 27 July at the celebration of the anniversary of Liberia's independence held at the

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[31]Blyden to Coppinger, 20 July 1871, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 204.

[32]Dictionary of National Biography, XVIII, 931-936.

[33]Blyden to Coppinger, 20 July 1871, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 204.

[34]Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Nov. 1874, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 17.

home of David Chinery in Middlesex, Blyden urged the British, as he had done before, to extend their influence in Africa:

> "England has it in her power to determine to a great extent, what the condition of West and Central Africa shall be ten or twenty years hence.... And now that the country is really open to enjoy the benefits which England for the last century, under very adverse circumstance, has striven to confer upon it, it is gratifying to find that the Government has paid no attention to the clamors of those who counselled immediate withdrawal from the Coast. A great deal has been done but a great deal still remains to be done before England can, in keeping with her philanthropic antecedents, honorably withdraw from the Coast."[35]

This visit in 1874 led to the establishment of Blyden's reputation in Britain by his contributing in the following two years three articles to Fraser's Magazine, one of Britain's leading quarterlies. In 1874 R. Bosworth Smith, a historian and Assistant Master at Harrow published in book-form a series of lectures on "Mohammed and the Mohammedans" which he had delivered at the "Royal Institution of Great Britain". Smith's views on Mohammedanism were strikingly similar to those of Blyden. Having come to the conclusion that most Christian writers wrote on Islam merely to "villify and misrepresent" it, he set out to give an honest and sympathetic picture of that religion, pointing out that there was much in common between the two religions, and that Islam had been a more powerful agency for good among "less progressive races".[36] With the prevailing European opinion one of contempt for Islam, those reviewers

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[35] African Repository, L (Oct. 1874), 300.

[36] Lady Ellinore Grogan, Reginald Bosworth Smith: A Memoir (London, 1909), 137.

who took notice of his work violently assailed it. The book was drawn to the attention of Blyden by Dean Stanley who was himself keenly interested in the subject.[37] So pleased was Blyden with Smith's book that he wrote the author thanking him for expressing such enlightened views, and so began a relationship which soon grew into firm friendship. On a six weeks' visit to England in 1876, Blyden spent much time at Smith's home at Harrow.

Blyden's enthusiastic endorsement of Smith's views was elaborated into a long review article which appeared in Fraser's Magazine of November 1875, with the editor pointing out that the author was "a Negro of the purest blood".[38] Much of the material in this article had already appeared in his article "Mohammedanism in West Africa", and in his private letters but, in addition, it effectively contrasted the influence of Mohammedanism and Christianity on the Negro race:

> "there are numerous Negro Mohammedan communities and states in Africa which are self-reliant, productive, independent... In Sierra Leone, the Mohammedans, without aid from the Government - or any contributions from Mecca or Constantinople, erect their mosques, keep up religious services, conduct their schools."[39]

He contended that among West African Negroes, Islam had

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[37] Lady Ellinore Grogan, Reginald Bosworth Smith: A Memoir, 154; Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Nov. 1874, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 17.

[38] Edward W. Blyden, Mohammedanism and the Negro Race, Fraser's Magazine, LXXI (Nov. 1875), 598, fn. 1.

[39] Ibid., 605.

> "strengthened and hastened certain tendencies to independence and self-reliance which were already at work. Their local institutions were not destroyed by the Arab influence introduced. They only assumed new forms, and adapted themselves to the new teachings. In all thriving Mohammedan communities in West and Central Africa, it may be noticed that the Arab superstructure has been super-imposed on a permanent indigenous substructure; so that what really took place when the Arab met the Negro in his own home, was a healthy amalgamation, and not an absorption or an undue repression."[40]

Christianity, Blyden convincingly argued, had had no such salutary effect on the Negro. Negroes first became Christians in significant numbers "as slaves or at least as a subject race in a foreign land", with disastrous results. For "Along with the Christian teaching, they received lessons of their utter and permanent inferiority and subordination to their instructors, to whom they stood in the relation of chattels". Moreover while "Mohammedanism and learning to the Muslim Negro were coeval", "no amount of allegiance to the Gospel relieved the Christian Negro from the degradation of wearing the chain which he received with it, or rescued him from the political and... ecclesiastical proscription" which he experienced "in the countries of his exile". Both "Aryan art" and literature had been employed to make the Negro submissive and servile. Indeed, he asserted, "It is not too much to say that the popular literature of the Christian world since the discovery of America, or, at least for the last two hundred years, has been anti-Negro".[41]

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[40] Blyden, Mohammedanism and the Negro Race LXXXI (Nov. 1875), 606.

[41] Ibid., 609.

Blyden deprecated "the singular anxiety /which/ seems to prevail... to disparage and depress the character of Mohammedan influence". "A Mohammedan writer", he wrote succinctly and effectively, "taking the same superficial view of the effects of Christianity ... might say 'Christianity has consecrated drunkenness; it has consecrated slavery; it has consecrated war..."[42]

If Blyden was in agreement with many of Smith's view, he found it necessary to chide the English scholar for using "Negro" - a term used "to designate one of the great families of man" - with a common "n". In addition, while Smith believed that Islam was better suited to the "less progressive" races, Blyden contended that Christianity in its essence was the highest form of religion to which any people can subscribe; indeed, he was still insisting that Islam in West Africa was "preliminary and preparatory" to Christianity.[43]

Blyden's article had proved that he was a highly knowledgeable scholar on Islam: he had shown an easy acquaintance with its literature in English, French, German as well as Arabic, and had demonstrated the advantage of first-hand acquaintance with its operation in West Africa. His article had been well-written, well-argued and marked by its independence of thought. Indeed, he had again given ample proof

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[42]Blyden, Mohammedanism and the Negro Race LXXI (Nov. 1875), 614.

[43]Ibid., 615.

that he was a supreme propagandist: that even though some of his statements might be challenged there was enough truth and plausibility in them to make rebuttal difficult: his picture of Islam was rose-coloured, his indictment of Christianity perhaps too severe.

So impressed was the editor of Fraser's Magazine with Blyden's article that he invited the Negro scholar to contribute others. His next, "Christianity and the Negro Race" was foreshadowed in his first article and in it he continued to indict Christianity with having had an adverse influence on New World Negroes. He argued that it was impossible for the Negro to secure "a proper individual or race development in the countries of his exile":

> "From the lesson he every day receives, the Negro unconsciously imbibes the conviction that to be a great man, he must be like the white man. He is not brought up - however he may desire it - to be the companion, the equal, the comrade of the white man, but his imitator, his ape, his parasite. To be himself in a country where everything ridicules him is to be nothing, less than nothing, to be as like the white man as possible - to copy his outward appearance, his peculiarities, his manners, the arrangement of his toilet, that is the aim of the Christian Negro - this is his inspiration. The only virtues which under such circumstances he develops are, of course, the parasitical ones. Every intelligent Negro, in the land of his exile must feel that he walks upon the face of this earth, a physical and moral incongruity..."[44]

The inherent race characteristics of the Negro, Blyden contended, was stifled in the cultural milieu of the New World; it was only in Africa

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[44]Edward W. Blyden, "Christianity and the Negro Race", Fraser's Magazine, LXXVII (May 1876), 563.

that these attributes could be developed: as a rationale for New World Negro emigration to Africa, Blyden pressed into his service the opposed doctrines of cultural relativism and biological determinism.

It is interesting to note that Blyden made a distinction between the influence of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism on New World Negroes to the advantage of the former:

> "The only Christians who have had the power successfully to throw off oppression, and maintain their positions as freemen, were Roman Catholic Negroes - the Haitians; and the greatest Negro the world has yet produced was a Roman Catholic - Toussaint L'Ouverture. At Rome, the names of Negroes, males and females, who have been distinguished for piety and good works are found in the calendar under the designation 'saints'. Protestantism has no Negro saints. The Negro under Protestant rule is kept in a state of tutelage and irresponsibility as can scarcely fail to make him constantly dependent and useless whenever, thrown upon himself, he has to meet an emergency."[45]

The yardstick used was that expected of a Negro nationalist: the degree to which Negroes could assert themselves, and the recognition of Negro achievements.

Blyden's next article which appeared in October 1876 examined "Christian Missions in West Africa" - not for him a new subject. Once again he pointed out that despite "so many years of effort and so vast a sacrifice of life and money", Christian missionary work in West Africa

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[45] Blyden, "Christianity and the Negro Race", Fraser's Magazine, LXXVII (May 1876), 564/565

had made no substantial progress.[46] This he ascribed to the arrogant belief of European missionaries in their own superiority, "the pernicious influence" of European traders on the Coast, and the unhealthiness of the Coast itself. He urged European missionaries to push into the interior but also emphasized that they ought to make "a special and constant study" of the customs and institutions of the Africans among whom they worked. He chided European missionaries for regarding "the African mind... as blank or worse than blank, filled with everything dark and horrible and repulsive". Taking the "sanguinary customs" of the King of Dahomey as an example of European attempt to disparage African customs, Blyden correctly pointed out that

> "the accounts often circulated of the large numbers killed are gross exaggerations, and the customs, far from being the result of a wanton desire to destroy human life, are a practice founded on a pure religious basis, designed as a sincere manifestation of the King's filial piety, sanctioned by long usage, upheld by a powerful priesthood, and believed to be closely bound up with the existence of Dahomey itself. It is not in the power of the king to abrogate the custom. Its gradual extinction must be the result of the increasing intelligence of the people."[47]

Blyden was the first Negro on the British literary scene to write in an authoritative, scholarly and yet thought-provoking manner about his race. Thus, when he took up his position as Liberian Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James, his reputation in Britain as

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[46] Edward W. Blyden, "Christian Missions in West Africa", Fraser's Magazine, LXXXII (Oct. 1876), 509.

[47] Ibid., 514.

a scholar was already established.

In London Blyden began negotiations with a view to settling the boundary dispute between Liberia and Sierra Leone. Since Blyden had last been Secretary of State, all attempts to settle the dispute had failed. In 1870, President Roye while in England had made it clear to Lord Granville, the British Foreign Secretary, that he was anxious to have the dispute settled. Granville had responded by offering to concede the Liberian claim up to the Sulima river, but would have a joint commission inquire into the validity of the Liberian claims west of that point.[48] The commission did not convene because of the political upheavals in Liberia which culminated in Roye's death. Meanwhile British traders continued to operate in the disputed area to the annoyance and embarrassment of the Liberian Government.

Blyden was making his second attempt to settle the dispute. He was received in his official capacity by Lord Derby at the Foreign Office on 22 August,[49] and on the same day sent his first despatch to the Foreign Secretary. As in his former efforts, Blyden did not rest Liberia's case solely on its legitimate claims. He sought, too, to excite sympathy for the aspirations of the Negro Republic by reminding the British Foreign Secretary that Liberia "owed its existence to philanthropists in the

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[48] Liberia, Foreign Office Confidential Handbook, No. 98 (1919), 12.

[49] Times, 23 Aug. 1877.

United States, and its continued national growth to the fostering care and kindness of Her Majesty's Government".[50] He pressed for an immediate settlement of the issue: unless this was done "serious complications and difficulties might arise which could inflict irreparable damage" on Liberia. He pointed out that the disputed territory was being used by traders to evade the custom duties of both Governments, and it was therefore as much in the interest of Sierra Leone as of Liberia to have the dispute settled. He suggested that the boundaries of the two countries should be made co-terminous and that a common tariff be adopted. He opposed the British idea that the Commission should meet on the site of the disputed territories pointing out that the native chiefs who denied Liberia's claims were "under extraneous influence which appealed mainly to their mercenary feelings" and were not likely to be impartial witnesses. Finally, he affirmed that Liberia had "no desire for territorial aggrandizement".[51]

But the Foreign Office was unsympathetic: it rejected Blyden's suggestion that there was no need for a commission to visit the disputed territory, while it revived the question of the claims against the Liberian Government of British subjects whose property had been seized or destroyed during a punitive expedition in March, 1871, made by the Liberian Government against Prince Mannah.[52]

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[50] F.O. 403/9, Blyden to Derby, 22 Aug. 1877.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., Derby to Blyden, 12 Sept. 1877.

To Lord Derby, Blyden replied that the pressing of this claim against Liberia was all the more reason why the dispute should be settled. He pointed out that until this was done" Liberia was placed in the dilemma of either submitting to the reckless infractions of their laws by foreign traders, and to a consequent subversion of all order in their territory, or resisting by force such infraction so as to check the tendency to widespread insubordination".[53] Again he appealed to the Foreign Secretary to act personally in favour of Liberia: "I trust Your Lordship, so far as it may be in your power to influence the decision of Her Majesty's Government, will use your good offices to keep before Her Majesty's Government all the circumstances of the case, as well as the weakness and inexperience of the Liberian state". Again he was playing on the sympathy of British Government officials. To help his lobbying for the settlement of the dispute in favour of Liberia, Blyden sought help from influential public figures in London, among them his acquaintance, Sir Samuel Gurney, President of the Anti-Slavery Society, and whose father had contributed a thousand pounds for the purchase of the now disputed territory.[54]

Blyden had come to the conclusion that the British Government had not shown more sympathy to Liberia because it was governed by mulattoes. He had been surprised to find that among the Confidential Prints of the

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[53]F.O. 403/9, Blyden to Derby, 3 Nov. 1877.

[54]Blyden to Gurney, 14 Aug. 1877, Anti-Slavery Papers.

Foreign Office on the Liberian Boundary dispute were reports from Sierra Leone telling of the conflict between Negroes and mulattoes in Liberia.[55] About two weeks after his first interview with Lord Derby he wrote that

> "the Negro - pure and simple, has a large margin yet of the sympathies of the Christian world of which to avail himself. Lord Derby was no doubt surprised when I presented myself before him. He looked at me very hard during the whole interview. The feeling of the British Government and of the higher classes here is in favour of encouraging Liberia if it is to be a Negro state; but if it is to be mongrel, they think the sooner it falls in the hands of the European powers the better for the aborigines."[56]

Blyden's diplomatic duties were not enviable ones: besides conducting negotiations for the settlement of the boundary dispute, he attempted to unravel the financial entanglements which the Roye loan had generated for Liberia. It is symptomatic of the gross mismanagement of Liberia's financial affairs in London that Blyden was, on the one hand, faced with a claim by the Foreign Office that Liberia owed four hundred pounds to the British Post Office, while, on the other, he had to seek legal means to secure one thousand pounds of the Republic's money from its Consul-General, Jackson, whom President Roberts had appointed to succeed Chinery, the man who had negotiated the loan. Blyden dismissed Jackson because he had squandered the money of the Liber-

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[55] F.O. 403/6, Kennedy to Granville, 20 Marc. 1869, enc. 14 and 15.

[56] Blyden to Coppinger, 3 Sept. 1877, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2. I have found no evidence to support this contention of Blyden's. But there is no doubt that the British Government was aware of the Negro-mulatto conflict in Liberia and regarded Liberia as "a perfect nuisance" and "a hopeless place" (see C.O. 267/311, Kennedy to Kimberley, 6 May 1871, Colonial Office Minutes).

ian Government. The Negro diplomat was perturbed by the "disagreeable attacks" on Liberia arising out of the Roye loan.

But he was heartened by his own reception and by the interest Britishers had evinced in Liberia. Lord Derby had been "kind" to him and had "treated him as though he was the head of an established legation"[57]. He was frequently the guest of important individuals, organizations and institutions, and welcomed those opportunities to create or increase interest in Liberia. Two weeks after his arrival in England, a big reception was given at Brighton in his honour and here he expressed the wish that his stay in England would help to promote friendly relations between Britain and the Negro Republic.[58] By the invitation of the Lord Mayor of London he attended on 9 November the great annual banquet at Guildhall sitting at "the Principal Table with the Ministers of the Cabinet and Foreign Ambassadors, the Chinese Minister between him and the American Minister".[59] On 13 November, he was the guest in London of "the Worshipful Company of Plumbers". "As the representative not only of Liberia ... but ... of the Negro race and of the great continent", he spoke hopefully of Africa as the "continent of the future" and of Liberia "as one of the brightest and most promising spots on the

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[57]Blyden to Coppinger, 3 Sept. 1877, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[58]West African Reporter, IV (3 Oct. 1877).

[59]Blyden to Coppinger, 15 Nov. 1877, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

continent of Africa".[60]

But amid the whirl of pleasant social life in London, Blyden did not forget his goals. At the time of his stay in London, Liberian coffee had become tremendously in vogue.[61] To encourage its growth even further, Blyden managed to persuade English capitalists to form a company. During his two years' stay on the St. Paul's river he had found that poverty among the people there had prevented them from fully availing themselves of educational facilities, and he felt that well-run, large scale agricultural enterprises could solve this problem. His plan aimed at giving greater security to farmers by eliminating their dependence on unscrupulous traders:[62] the English company was to provide the capital, the machinery, provisions and goods at a cheaper rate than could ordinarily be obtained, as well as ready cash to the native farmers so that they could expand the area of their operation and hire more labourers. The entire crops of the farmers who participated in the scheme were to be shipped to England with one-fourth of the proceeds going to the farmers themselves. In organizing this scheme, Blyden had in mind new emigrants from America: if the scheme were successfully operated it would provide employment for them and prevent the

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[60] West African Reporter, IV (19 Dec. 1877).

[61] Times, 24 and 28 Aug. 1878.

[62] Blyden to J.C.Lowrie, 21 April 1877, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 11.

discouragement and disillusionment which many of them suffered in their first few months in the Republic. He held high hopes that this agricultural scheme would be the means by which Liberia would "cease depending upon America for her religious and educational institutions".[63]

Before leaving to assume the duties of his special appointment in London, Blyden had, "to the great disgust of the traders", persuaded seven farmers to participate in the agricultural scheme. And despite the poor publicity in the London press which Liberia was then receiving, he was able to persuade "some of the friends of Africa and his own personal friends" to organize a company to carry out his plans. The Company was called the Liberia Coffee Estates Ltd., its London Agents were Malcolm, Brunner and Company; and Blyden was its General Superintendent in Liberia.

After four months in London Blyden had to return to Liberia to see if the new President or the new Liberian Government would confirm his appointment. But before leaving London he was determined that the new administration of President Anthony William Gardner which was to start on 1 January 1878, would "enter into work with some dignity". Hitherto every Liberian administration had "found itself destitute of stationary and everything with which to carry on the Government". Now, he had "paper and envelopes prepared for the various departments - stamped and headed

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[63]Blyden to Coppinger, 3 Sept. 1877, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

so that they may be used only for office purposes".[64]

In Liberia Blyden's efforts in London had not been appreciated: there was a widespread feeling that the Republic should not have taken the initiative in reopening the question of Liberia's boundary with Sierra Leone. The majority in President Gardner's cabinet as well as in the Houses of Representatives was against Blyden's re-appointment.[65] But President Gardner, who was satisfied that Blyden could do much to promote the welfare of the Republic in Britain, confirmed his appointment. This caused one resignation from President Gardner's Cabinet - that of the Secretary of State, H.R.W.Johnson who felt that it was "an absurdity" for Liberia to have an ambassador abroad and that Blyden in that position was the first step towards "the dismemberment of the Republic"[66]: Blyden's friendliness towards the British had caused misgivings among some leading Liberians.

Returned to London in late May 1878, Blyden had four major diplomatic goals in mind: to continue to urge a settlement of the Liberian Boundary question in favour of the Republic; to make clear Liberia's willingness to honour its debt and to make arrangements for the payment of at least the interest; to endeavour to secure for his government a small vessel to serve as a revenue cutter and so prevent violation of

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[64]Blyden to Coppinger, 15 Nov. 1877, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, pt. 2.

[65]Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Aug. Ibid.

[66]Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Aug. 1878, Ibid.

custom laws by foreign vessels along the Liberian coast; and finally, to secure the investment of foreign capital in a railway from Monrovia or the St. Paul's river to the high and populous regions of the interior.[67]

With regard to the Boundary question, the Liberian Government had failed to name its members for the proposed joint commission which was supposed to meet in the earlier and drier months of 1878. In the interim, Sir Samuel Rowe, Governor of Sierra Leone, was recommending that the British Government take a hard line against Liberia; he suggested that Liberia should be made to pay the indemnity assessed against it for damages done to British traders and at the same time revived the claim of the British Government to extend its protectorate along the coast as far as the Mano River, partly on the pretext that the Liberians were unable to keep order among the tribes west of that river.[68] But with a boundary commission due to meet in 1879 there was little more Blyden could do on behalf of the Republic.

In his objective of building a railway from the coast to the interior of Liberia, Blyden felt that his best chance of obtaining aid was from the United States Government. In London he had cultivated the friendship of the American ambassador, John Welsh, with whom

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[67]Blyden to Gibson, 30 Aug. 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[68]Johnson, Liberia, 268.

he started a correspondence with a view to persuading him of "the paramount importance to Liberia" of a railroad into the interior. The United States ambassador replied expressing doubt that such aid could be constitutionally given, but nonetheless forwarded his correspondence with Blyden to the United States Acting Secretary of States, William H. Seward, who noted that Blyden's suggestion had been received "with great interest" and would be duly considered.[69] Blyden interpreted this reply as "encouraging" and wrote the Board of the American Colonization Society urging them to lobby on behalf of the project. Again, Blyden's idea of a railroad into the interior of Liberia was linked up with American Negro emigration to Liberia; he envisaged that the proposed railway would facilitate

> "black Americans... moving eastward from California to the banks of the Niger and further still even to the highlands of Abyssinia. And who can say that it was not reserved for the United States to cross two continents by the energy of its citizens and plant its institutions from the Indian to the Pacific Ocean."[70]

Of course, no such ambitious project could be seriously entertained by the United States Government.

Working in London for a bankrupt Government, Blyden found "arduous". Unsalaried and "without one cent from the Liberian Government" he yet managed to establish a legation of the Liberian Government mainly through

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[69]Welsh to Blyden, 8 Aug. 1878, enc. in Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Aug. 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[70]Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Aug. 1878, Ibid.

the financial help "from his English friends".[71] The lack of the backing of a strong or stable Government greatly diminished his importance and his bargaining powers. He had to contend with clamorous Liberian bondholders who would not be satisfied with his pledge that it was the intention of his Government to redeem its debts. He had failed to obtain a vessel as revenue cutter for Liberia because he was unable to negotiate the necessary loan solely on Presidential orders and without the authority of the Liberian Government.[72] Of his coffee enterprise, the result of the first year had fully justified his confidence in it: there had been a marked increase in the yield of coffee on the St. Pauls River, but an economic depression which hit England in 1878 gave the Liberian Coffee Company a major set-back.

But for a man of Blyden's tastes and predilections, life in London had ample compensations. His growing literary reputation plus the sympathy and respect which was commonly offered to outstanding Negroes by the British upper class of the nineteenth century, brought him an increasingly larger number of influential friends and acquaintances; and in all these encounters Blyden thought of himself primarily as a representative and ambassador of the Negro race. He maintained contact with Gurney and Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and encouraged their efforts to protect the interest of native Africans.[73] There was his old friend-

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[71]Blyden to Coppinger, 7 Sept. 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[72]Blyden to Gibson, 30 Aug. 1878, Ibid.

[73]Blyden to Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, 22 June 1878, Anti-Slavery Papers.

ship with Gladstone whose guest he frequently was at the House of Commons. There was, too, his friendship with the affable Dean of Canterbury who regularly entertained Blyden at his home. One such occasion was the evening of 24 January 1878, when Blyden and three other Negroes, King George of Bonny, John H. Smyth, and James T. Holly, Bishop of Haiti, were among a large number of guests entertained by Dean Stanley. This kind of social intercourse was very to his liking: he wrote proudly to Coppinger: "For the first time, I believe, in the history of English Society have four persons of purely African descent so freely mingled with the elite".[74]

While in London his literary reputation was further enhanced by the publication in Fraser's Magazine of yet another article: "Africa and the Africans". Much of the information in the article was not new: he considered it necessary to repeat his message so that it would make the desired impact: in their contacts with Africans, Europeans should "study the man, his customs and institutions carefully" - Herbert Spencer's recently published African Sociology[75] was a step in the right direction, but although a work of "monumental industry", it was an "untrustworthy guide" because the basic facts were drawn from "unreliable travellers"; Europeans should treat the Negro on his merit: he deserved neither the "violent antagonism" of his foes, nor "the false and undue admiration" of his friends.[76] It is interesting to note, too, that for

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[74]Blyden to Coppinger, 6 Aug. 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[75]Herbert Spencer (ed.), Descriptive Sociology: African Races (London, 1875).

[76]Edward W. Blyden, "Africa and the Africans", Fraser's Magazine, CIV (Aug. 1878), 182.

the first and only time in his public writings, Blyden stated his conviction that the mulatto was not a Negro and was rather a hindrance to the Negro race:

> "One of the melancholy results of the enslavement of the African by the European is the introduction on a very large scale of the blood of the oppressors among their victims, which even when largely preponderating over or even balanced with the Negro blood, is still reckoned, by what rule or fairness or on what principle of ethnology we cannot understand, as Negro blood. And in taking into account the deficiencies of Negro communities, where, as they are at present constituted in Christian lands, this element largely prevails, it is never considered as having any part in the production of the results deplored, but rather at times, as imposing a salutary and restraining influence on 'Negro barbarism'.... If it is understood hereafter [that the mulatto is not a Negro] it will simplify the Negro problem, and the race will be called upon to bear its own sins only and not the sins also of a "mixed multitude".[77]

Blyden was proving himself a formidable vindicator of the Negro race.

In London he was frequently the guest of friends at such literary and social rendezvous as the Athenaeum, and the Russell and Sunbeam Clubs, where he made the acquaintance of outstanding litterateurs and scholars. For instance, it was at the Athenaeum that he first met Herbert Spencer, the British philosopher and sociologist. Blyden reported the story of their meeting: "By a curious coincidence when he came in I had before me Coussin de Perceval's Histoire des Arabes in which I was trying to verify a quotation made from that work in Spencer's

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[77] Blyden, "Africa and the Africans", Fraser's Magazine, CIV (Aug. 1878), 188. Blyden's American and English "friends" seemed to have been unhappy about the public expression of such views: it is noteworthy that when this article was later published as part of Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race in 1887, the quoted passage was left out.

Principles of Sociology which also lay before me".[78] This gave them a good starting point for conversation which at first centred on the interior tribes of Africa and of the "wonderful coffee" that was indigenous to Liberia. Spencer then mentioned that he had read Blyden's recent article, "Africa and the Africans" in Fraser's Review and then commented: "It is quite a new thing to find members of your race writing as you have done on questions of race, and I consider it very useful".[79] Blyden was extremely gratified by this remark and received it "as in the highest degree complimentary"; to him it was "no small encouragement to have the imprimatur of one of the leading thinkers of Europe".[80] Herbert Spencer was the type of British that Blyden was most impressed with:

> "He has the quiet and refined manner of a gentleman, nothing self-assertive or dogmatic, apparently carries on conversation on his part in a sort of interrogatory yet suggestive manner. It is so charming to meet such persons. They make you feel at home at once - and you learn so much while appearing to teach."

Two of Blyden's most gratifying experiences during his stay in London in 1878 was his audience before Queen Victoria and his election as an honorary member of the Athenaeum Club. He was received by the Queen on July 30,[81] an event to which he attached the highest significance:

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[78] Blyden to Coppinger, 7 Sept. 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18. Pt. 2.

[79] Quoted in Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Monrovia Observer, 111,(8. Jan. 1880)

he felt that this formal recognition of Liberia's representation at the Court of St. James was of "immense service to Liberia" who now had "in the eyes of the British people made a step in advance".[82] He wanted Coppinger to publish the news of his reception by the Queen in the African Repository so that it "might serve to encourage Negro youth in America".[83] Dean Stanley had proposed Blyden for honorary membership of the Athenaeum[84] and his election to "one of the most aristocratic and exclusive clubs in London" Blyden regarded as "one of the chief triumphs of his literary life".[85]

Because Blyden believed that a Liberian legation in London would help to give Liberia the prestige that it so badly needed, he was all the more perturbed that there was strenuous opposition in Liberia to this, and that the Legation was likely to be discontinued. He took what little measure he could to avoid this. He pleaded with Coppinger to insert the news of the opening of the Legation in the African Repository and to send a copy to each member of the Liberian legislature to encourage them to keep it up.[86] Blyden was heartened when Rev. G. W. Gibson who had replaced Hilary Johnson as Secretary of State pledged his support to him and "others who were so inclined to

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[82]Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Aug. 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[83]Blyden to Coppinger, 6 Aug. 1878, Ibid.

[84]West African Reporter, VII, (July 23, 1881).

[85]Blyden to Coppinger, 9 Aug. 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[86]Blyden to Coppinger, 6 Aug. 1878, Ibid.

affect some good for the nation and the race".[87] Blyden wrote to him expressing his "gratification... that the Legation will have your able and efficient support at the Department of State of Monrovia". He wanted Gibson to have no doubt whatever of the importance to Liberia of the London legation: he wrote:

> "The residence of a Liberian Minister with full diplomatic powers at the Court of St. James and recognized personally in the highest social and literary circles gives the whole national character of the Republic a new aspect and a fresh significance in the eyes of the world....
>
> The importance of the step on the part of Liberia of establishing a Legation here cannot be exaggerated and I am endeavouring to make its influence felt not only here but in the continent of Europe and America."[88]

But the view of the majority of articulate Liberians was to prevail: Blyden was recalled and the temporary legation was closed down.

Blyden left England on 19 December, 1878, for Sierra Leone where the Anglo-Liberian boundary commission was due to meet early in the new year. Both parties had agreed to have the American naval captain, Commodore R. W. Shufeldt, act as an impartial arbiter in the settlement of the dispute. But even so, Liberians were apprehensive of the outcome. The attitude of ex-President Warner, now agent of the American Colonization Society was typical: he was convinced that the British Government was trying to "gobble up" the land in dispute. He saw as sinister the

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[87] Gibson to Blyden, 31 July, 1878. A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[88] Blyden to Gibson, 30 Aug. 1878, Ibid.

fact that the Chiefs of the area who were due to give evidence before the commission had been invited to Sierra Leone before hand as guests of the Sierra Leone Government.[89]

Blyden himself held an ambivalent view on the question of the boundary dispute: he believed that legally Liberia's claim was just, morally, unjust. His judgment on the issue was greatly influenced by his intense dislike of mulattoes; he had, in no exaggerated manner, ascribed all the difficulty with the natives to mulatto misrule, and when he looked at it in this manner was inclined to be indifferent as to the outcome. It was precisely this point of view that he expressed to Commodore Shufeldt:

> "I am less anxious for the acquisition by Liberia of twenty or thirty miles of territory than I am for the suppression in the Republic of the mongrel elements whose hostile spirits towards the natives have given rise to this question and which as long as it has power in the Republic will keep up a continual quarrel between Liberia and the aborigines. This question of Boundary is one between the Natives and Liberia - it is purely a domestic question into which foreigners need never have been brought had the aboriginal owners of Gallinas been treated with sympathy by the Liberian Government - which would have been the case had it not been pampered by ambitious and short-sighted mulattoes - they would gladly have become a part and parcel of the Republic. But as it is now, if the question were decided in favour of Liberia with the impression in the Native mind that the Liberians despise them, there will be no harmony between the two peoples."[90]

Blyden's seeming indifference to the outcome of the dispute can be ex-

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[89]Warner to Coppinger, Dec. 6, 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

[90]Blyden to Shufeldt, 2 Feb. 1879, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 1.

plained, too, by the fact that, for him, any boundary between Sierra Leone and Liberia was artificial and could not last; he confidently looked forward to the time when Liberia would "absorb" Sierra Leone as part of a larger West African state. And if two months after his first note, Blyden wrote again to Shufeldt requesting him "not to allow Liberia to lose an important advantage because unworthy men in the past, who misunderstood their work and their position, abused their privilege", it was on the practical ground that the Vai tribe , one of the most intelligent in West Africa, would be divided in two should Liberia lose the territory in dispute.[91]

When Blyden arrived in Sierra Leone he found that the two Liberian commissioners, Smith and Hilton, were mulatto; Gibson, a Negro, whom he had expected to be on the commission had withdrawn because of ill-health. Blyden was unhappy at the sight of the mulatto commissioners. He believed that "Their very appearance as being more white than black and their constitutional vanity and self-importance prejudices the question in the mind of Europeans...."[92] Hilton, moreover, had been one of those who had opposed Blyden's appointment to London. The result was that, while it was manifestly in the interest of the Republic that the three Liberians should confer, the two commissioners studiously avoided the Negro scholar and vice-versa. When Commodore Shufeldt did

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[91]Blyden to Shufeldt, 18 Apr. 1879, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 1.

[92]Blyden to Coppinger, 2 Feb. 1879, Ibid.

finally bring them together it could not have been a very useful meeting: Blyden, for his part, attempted to show them "how thoroughly they misunderstood the question", they for their part, thought the same of Blyden. At any rate, this commission, too, after conferring both at Sierra Leone and on the disputed territory could not come to an agreement and again left the dispute unsettled.

Although he had been apprehensive about going back to Liberia because of the "quarrels and bickerings there",[93] Blyden did, in fact return on March 12, 1879. Mindful of his literary triumphs in England, Liberians gave him a hearty welcome. At Harrisburg on the St. Paul's river, they welcomed him back as a "distinguished fellow citizen" and praised him "for the great and noble work he was doing".[94] But even more significant was the public reception given him by the Liberian Government in the House of Representatives "to mark its sense of his merit and recognition of services of his representation of Liberia abroad".[95] He was praised as "one of the rare men of the present century" and as one who had undertaken the task of educating the civilized world about Africa and the Negro. Blyden confessed to being "taken by surprise" and saw the proceedings as a "sort of instalment from the future - a glimpse of the hereafter" because already he had resigned

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[93] Blyden to Coppinger, 2 Feb. 1879, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 1.

[94] West African Reporter, V,(16 Apr. 1879).

[95] Ibid.

himself to seeing his work "generally misunderstood" while he lived.[96] He was once more optimistic that a new dispensation was in store for the race and it was clear to him what his duty was:

> "I feel thankful that I was born and grew up just as the shades of Africa's deepest night were melting into the twilight of liberty for the race when the dead past of her suffering was fast receding, but still before the period of her exaltation had arrived; and I was determined to contribute what I could to assist in forging at least one of the many links by which God unites period with period."

The task of working for the Negro race he knew was a great, noble, arduous and difficult one, but he was willing to pay any price in performing it. Liberia could not now resist the progress of events: his patriotic reception he saw as one of the signs of Liberia's progress.[97]

But even while he was attempting to be optimistic about Liberia's future, Blyden was finding evidence which produced gloom in him. In his goal of developing the interior of Liberia, Blyden sought the help of Commodore Shufeldt to whom he confided: "I have dreams of an interior state of Africans starting from Boporo and going back - the world needs such a state and such a state no doubt sooner or later it will have".[98] Blyden had not yet abandoned his scheme for a railroad running into the interior of Liberia. A survey of a likely railway route had first to be undertaken. It was on Blyden's prompting and

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[96] West African Reporter, V,(16 April 1879).

[97] Ibid.

[98] Blyden to Shufeldt, 18 April 1879, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 1.

with the sanction and co-operation of the Liberian Government that Commodore Shufeldt had ordered two of his officers to conduct a survey of the St. Paul's river.[99] These were assisted by Benjamin Anderson and twenty-seven natives. With the survey of the St. Paul's started, Blyden was hopeful that a petition by the American Colonization Society to the United States Congress for an appropriation of twenty five thousand dollars to build a railway from Monrovia along the St. Paul's river over the Kong mountains "into the Valley of the Niger and the heart of the Soudan",[100] would be successful. This was not to be. Nor was the survey itself completed: Blyden gave as the reasons for this the apathy of the Liberian Government and mulatto discrimination against Negro which had come to the attention of Commodore Shufeldt: he instanced the case where the Commodore had invited President Gardner and his Cabinet to breakfast aboard his ship, the "Ticonderoga" and all but one black member of the Cabinet had been notified.[101] In a huff, Blyden once again left for Sierra Leone where he spent most of the remainder of the year.

On his return at the end of the year Blyden found himself feted[102] and his services much in demand: early in the new year not only was

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[99] American Colonization Society, Sixty-third Annual Report, (Washington, 1880), 13.

[100] loc.cit.

[101] Blyden to Coppinger, 23 April, 1879, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 1.

[102] Monrovia Observer, 111, (8 Jan. 1880).

he offered the Presidency of Liberia College by the local Board of Trustees, but also a position in President Gardner's Cabinet as Minister of the Interior and Secretary of Education.[103] Blyden gladly accepted both, but it was to turn out that the combination of offices as educator and politician was impolitic.

This offer of the Presidency of Liberia College was to Blyden like a dream come true. As early as 1874 he had been ambitious to become President of the College: he wanted then to take the place of J. J. Roberts because he believed that, hitherto, mulattoes had used Liberia College "as a conspiracy against the Negro race".[104] He had written to Coppinger seeking help in fulfilling his ambition; already he had plans for the College if he were appointed President:

> "I should at once publish a History and Prospectus of the institution. I should enter into rapport with some literary institutions in England and America .... I should bring students from Boporo, Musardu, Sierra Leone, Lagos - and make the College a place of learning for Africa and the race."[105]

But Coppinger had no influence with the Boards of trustees for Liberia College who, at any rate, would not then have seriously considered him as a suitable candidate for the Presidency because of their gen-

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[103] West African Reporter, VI,(21 Jan. 1880).

[104] Blyden to Coppinger, 19 Oct. 1874, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 17.

[105] Ibid.

eral impression that he was unstable and immoral.

The College itself had been an abysmal failure. Far from being a centre of academic learning, it had become, as we have seen, one of the battle grounds for the Negro-mulatto conflict in Liberia. The Presidency of J. J. Roberts had been long and inept, and in his last feeble years, academic activity at the College sank to a low ebb. On Robert's death in 1876, the Boston Trustees suspended the College on the ground "that it had failed to be of practical utility for the purpose of education in the Republic".[106] Blyden had seen the suspension as another "triumph of the mulatto ring" and felt "irrepressible indignation... at this unfortunate action".[107] However, in 1877, the Boston Board reopened the College and appointed H.R.W.Johnson as President. Within a year Johnson resigned; and Rev. John B. Pinney, a white man, and Secretary of the New York Colonization Society was appointed instead. Pinney arrived in Monrovia in May, 1878, and decided that the College should be removed into the interior.[108] Blyden, who was at that time in London, was enthusiastic about the appointment of Pinney; he hoped that through him the College affairs would at last be removed from the arena of Negro-mulatto conflict.[109] But Pinney was unable to persuade

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[106]Allen, Trustees of Donation for Education in Liberia, 39.

[107]Blyden to Coppinger, 19 June, 1876, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 1.

[108]Allen, Trustees of Donation for Education in Liberia, 41.

[109]Blyden to Coppinger, Oct. 26, 1878, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 18, Pt. 2.

the Liberian Trustees to agree to have the College set up in the interior, and after six months in Monrovia resigned and returned to the United States.[110] Thus, for more than a year after Pinney's resignation, the College had been without a President. And now Blyden had been offered the Presidency on terms for which he had long fought: the College was to be removed to a more suitable site in the interior; state scholarships were to be given to native youths, particularly sons of chiefs; the College was to teach "agricultural and mechanical arts" as well as literary subjects; and, finally, a native teacher of Arabic and West African languages was to be employed.[111]

Although Blyden was appointed by the Liberian Trustees to the Presidency of Liberia College, it was by no means certain that his appointment would be approved by the Boston and New York Board of Trustees. No one doubted his ability; but many had misgivings about his views on race and the suitability of his temperament. To discuss his own appointment and the reorganization of Liberia College, Blyden was authorized by the Liberia Trustees to visit the United States. During a two month visit he succeeded in "removing many bad impressions and baseless doubts" from the minds of the trustees, and had his Presidency confirmed.[112] He also got approval for plans to remove

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[110] Blyden to Lowrie, 6 Dec. 1876, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 11.

[111] Resolutions Adopted by the Board of Trustees at their annual meeting, January 19, 1880, for the benefit of Liberia College, [111] Resolutions Vol. 19, Pt. 2, No. 106.

[112] Coppinger to Blyden, 1 June 1880, Coppinger Letter-books, Vol. 21; also Allen, Trustees of Donation for Education in Liberia, 47.

the College from Monrovia into the interior.

Blyden returned to Liberia with high optimism: the opportunity for which he had longed of establishing a superior institution of learning in West Africa was at last given him. He set about his task with vigour. Realizing that the success of Liberia College would depend upon the financial and moral support of as many West Africans as possible, he made every effort to stimulate widespread public interest in the College. The measure of his success can be indicated by the fact that an unprecedentedly large crowd attended the first public examination conducted under Blyden's Presidency. Also significant was the fact that for the first time, two Vai chiefs and several other persons from rural Liberia attended a ceremony at Liberia College.[113] By December, Liberia College had started a course of public lectures, the President himself delivering the first of those on "Toussaint L'Overture, the Emancipator of Haiti".[114] Already Liberia College had begun to "excite interest all along the coast" of West Africa.[115]

Blyden's formal inauguration as President took place on 5 February 1881. His address on this occasion was brilliant, purposeful, and in parts at least, as we shall see, controversial. He left no doubt

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[113] American Colonization Society, Sixty-fifth Annual Report (Washington, 1881), 15.

[114] Monrovia Observer, 111, (25 Nov. 1880).

[115] Blyden to Coppinger, 25 Mar. 1881, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 1.

that he expected the College to play a large and important role not only in Liberia, or even West Africa, but on behalf of the entire Negro race. His view of the College was that it was "only a machine, an instrument to assist in carrying forward our regular work, devised not only for intellectual ends, but for social purposes, for religious duty, for patriotic ends, for racial development...."[116] Mindful of the indifference or active opposition with which his schemes to promote higher learning had been met by Africans themselves, Blyden saw the first task of Liberia College to be "generative":

> "It must create a sentiment favourable to its existence. It must generate the intellectual and moral state in the community which will give it not only a congenial atmosphere in which to thrive, but food and nutriment for its enlargement and growth." [117]

Ultimately the role of Liberia College was to counteract the evil influences which European ideas and teachings had had on the Negro, to correct European misrepresentation of Africa and the Negro, and to play the leading role in interpreting Africa to the rest of the world. Because the coast was a constant reminder of the detrimental effects on Africans of "foreign ideas and foreign manners", and because the future of Liberia lay in the interior, Blyden wanted the College removed to the banks of the St. Paul's River. Here,

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[116] Edward Wilmor Blyden, "Aims and Methods of a Liberal Education for Africans", in Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 82.

[117] Ibid., 83.

health of body, "the indispensable condition of health of mind, could be secured"; here, too, "students may devote a portion of their time to manual labour in the cultivation of the fertile lands which will be accessible, and thus assist in procuring from the soil the means for meeting a large part of the necessary expenses, and where access to the institution will be convenient to the aborigines."[118]

In Blyden's estimate the new Liberia College was the only institution of higher learning anywhere that could provide proper education for Negroes. To him

> "The object of all education is to secure growth and efficiency; to make a man all that his natural gifts would allow him to become; to produce self-respect, a proper appreciation of our powers and of those of other people; to beget a fitness for one's sphere of life and action and an ability to discharge the duties it imposes."[119]

But the influence of European teachings on Africans (both in Africa and abroad) had had the opposite effect: it had produced imitators and men "lacking in self-respect and efficiency". This had been so because the method of teaching had been unsuited to the Africans and the information imparted was often false. In Blyden's own words:

> "...they have taught us books too much and things too little, forms of expression and very little importance of thought. The notion still common among Negroes ... is that the most important part of knowledge consists

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[118] Blyden, "Aims and Methods of a Liberal Education for Africans", in Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 84.

[119] Ibid., 85.

> in knowing what other men - foreigners - have said about things, and even about Africa, and about themselves. They aspire to be familiar not with what really is, but with what is presented.... Hence some of us are found repeating things against outselves which are thoroughly injurious and false to us, only because we read them in books or have heard them from foreign teachers. The idea never seems to occur to such persons that there are subjects of inquiry, especially in this large and interesting country of theirs, about which the truth is yet to be found out, and people and customs and systems about which correct ideas are yet to be formed."[120]

The result of this unquestioning acceptance by Africans of European teaching was that

> "We have neglected to study matters at home because we were trained in books written by foreigners and for a foreign race... and from these books we learn that the Negro at home was a degraded being - a heathen and worse than a heathen - a fool; and we were taught everything excellent and praiseworthy about foreigners. Therefore we turned out backs upon our brethren in the interior as those from whom we could learn nothing to elevate, to enlighten, or to refine. A result of this is that we have not yet acted for ourselves. We have had history written for us, and we have endeavoured to act upon it, whereas the true order is that history should be first acted, then written. It is easy to account, then, for the want of genuine life and spontaneity of the people."[121]

Blyden expected that Liberia College would take the lead in reversing this trend:

> "The African must advance by methods of his own. He must possess a power distinct from that of the European.
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> We must show that we are able to go alone, to carve our own way. We must not be satisfied that, in this nation, Euro-

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[120] Blyden, "Aims and Methods of a Liberal Education for Africans", in Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 88.

[121] Loc.cit.

> pean influence shapes our polity, makes our laws, rules in our tribunals, and impregnates our social atmosphere. We must not suppose that the Anglo-Saxon methods are final.... We must study our brethren in the interior who know more than we do the laws of the growth for the race."[122]

But if he inveighed against the adverse influence of the worst aspects of European teaching on the African, Blyden was prepared to admit that "the instruments of culture, in its better form at least, was everywhere the same"; he intended using the basic European curriculum after divesting it of its "distracting influences". As the College grew he intended to foster more and more purely African subjects. For the time being the basic academic curriculum would consist of "the earlier epochs of world history"; the classics, mathematics, the Bible without commentaries, Arabic and some of the principal native languages.[123] It was for good reasons that Blyden would permit the study of history only up to the medieval period. It was not only that he believed that the modern intellectual activities of Europe, even though it had produced "some of the greatest work of human genius", could not equal those of Greece and Rome at their prime, but more importantly, the modern period was likely to have a harmful effect on African minds because it was during this period that "the transatlantic slavetrade arose and those theories - logical, social and political - were invented for the degradation and proscription of

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[122]Blyden, "Aims and Methods of a Liberal Education for Africans",

[122]Blyden Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 90.

[123]Ibid., 95.

the Negro". This was the most controversial part of his curriculum.[124] The study of the Greek and Latin languages and literature was permissible because there were not in them "a sentence, a word, or a syllable disparaging to the Negro". They could give the Negro mental discipline without "injecting him with race poison". Arabic and native languages were, of course, for the purpose of having "intelligent intercourse with the millions accessible to us in the interior".[125]

Characteristically, Blyden ended his address by pleading for the support and co-operation of Liberians:

> "We have a great work before us, a work unique in the history of the world, which others who appreciate its vastness and importance, envy us the privilege of doing. The world is looking at this Republic to see whether 'order and law, religion and morality, the rights of conscience, the rights of property' may be secured and preserved by a government administered by Negroes. Let us show ourselves equal to the task.
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> The time is past when we can be content with putting forth elaborate arguments to prove our equality with foreign races .... The suspicion, disparaging to us will be dissipated only by the exhibition of the indisputable realities of a lofty manhood as they may be illustrated in successful efforts to build up a nation, to wrest from Nature her secrets, to lead the van of progress in this country and regenerate a continent."[126]

Thus, Blyden expected Liberia College to play an important role in shaping the destiny of the Negro Republic. But there were obstacles

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[124] Monrovia Observer, IV (23 June, 1881).

[125] Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 101.

[126] Ibid., 107.

in the way of the College developing into an influential institution. The first and major difficulty was that of raising adequate funds for running the College. Blyden, of course, was keenly aware of this difficulty. Shortly after his inauguration as President, he urgently appealed in a circular to West Africans for donations with which to endow chairs of Moral and Physical Sciences, and of Arabic and Native Languages; he wished to see funds invested on behalf of the College which would bring in a steady income and ensure its continuous development.[127] Until funds could be raised for constructing new buildings in the interior, Liberia College had to continue to operate in Monrovia. The building here was in a dilapidated condition but repairs and renovations were carried out through communal help. The January term of 1881 opened with twenty-seven students in the Preparatory Department and eight boys, one of whom was from Sierra Leone, in the College itself.[128] The library was small, with some four thousand volumes and with all the reference books hopelessly out of date. The staff was skeletal: four, including the President himself for both sections of the institution. But before long Blyden was seeking to attract Negro scholars from other West African territories: in March, 1881, he offered the Chair of Moral Philosophy to John B. McEwen, a West Indian "of first class education and culture" who had

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[127] West African Reporter, VII (19 Feb. 1881).

[128] Blyden to Coppinger, 4 July 1881 A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 1.

been a missionary in the Rio Pongo since 1871.[129] The Chair of Arabic and West African Studies he offered to Muhammed Waka, Assistant Arabic writer to the Sierra Leone Government. But he failed in both cases to attract them perhaps mainly because of the unremunerativeness of his offer.

If gross inadequacy of funds was one factor militating against the success of Liberia College, another was the character of the President himself. He was essentially a man of ideas, but his attempts to execute them were invariably blundering and unrealistic: in matters in which he considered a principle was involved, he was devoid of tact or diplomacy if he were opposed. His assuming the presidency did not change his attitude to mulattoes: he still continued in his paranoic dislike and distruct of them. But success of Liberia College depended on co-operation with mulattoes. Of the six members of the Board of Trustees, four were mulattoes, and there was no evidence that these were unwilling to co-operate with Blyden. But Blyden, by now conditioned in his reaction to mulattoes, continued to regard the mulattoes as a "hampering influence" and wished to see them replaced.[130] He had made the pointed remark which appeared in the African Repository that for the first time in the history of the College all eight students were Negroes, and this had brought on him the wrath of

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[129]Blyden to Coppinger, 25 Mar. 1881, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 1.

[130]Blyden to Coppinger, 4 July, 1881, Ibid.

mulattoes.[131] He seemed to have regarded his appointment as President of Liberia College as the beginning of Negro ascendancy in Liberia in education as well as in politics.[132]

Blyden had further nullified his efforts on behalf of the College by assuming, while still retaining his presidency, a political appointment as Minister of the Interior. His acceptance of his appointment was understandable: in Liberia, where there was a severe shortage of qualified men, such combinations of office in one person was not uncommon. He himself was intensely interested in pushing Liberia's influence into the interior, but nonetheless it was an unwise and impolitic decision: his duties as Minister of the Interior took him away, not infrequently, from the College, at a time when he could easily have devoted all his energies to that institution. Besides, although he did not so regard it, his appointment to an especially controversial ministry made of him a political partisan, a characterization which was not likely to facilitate the carrying out of his duties as President of the College. The difficulty to which Blyden's combining of the two offices in himself gave rise could be illustrated by the following incident: Blyden, as Minister of the Interior and Secretary of Education, wished to replace Arthur Barclay by R. B. Richardson as Principal of the Preparatory Department of Liberia College. By President Barclay's order

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[131] Blyden to Coppinger, Sept. 13, 1881, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 1.

[132] Ibid.

this was done. But the Trustees of Liberia College denied that the Liberian President had the power to dismiss a member of the staff. They therefore upheld Barclay in office, even though Richardson was supposed to have assumed his duties. The impasse continued for three months, and although Blyden finally secured the appointment of Richardson, the incident had strained the relationship between the President and the Board of Trustees. This incident, too, illustrated the fact that it was not only with mulattoes that Blyden failed to get along. Barclay was a "pure Negro" but because he did not share Blyden's detestation of the men of mixed blood, Blyden concluded that Barclay "was a tool of mulattoes".[133] The fact was that Blyden was a difficult man to work with mainly because he regarded himself as a "providential agent" working on behalf of the Negro race and was always convinced about the rightness of his ideas. He reacted to opposition by assuming a martyr-complex: he wrote to Coppinger that he was prepared to die for the cause of Liberia's advancement, and continued: "I know God is at the helm and guiding the ship; and if they (mulattoes) succeed in killing me they will have to utterly annihilate the ashes, for out of them will arise a stronger influence than any they have yet witnessed in Liberia for the right whose triumph they dread".[134] Blyden's bitter verbal opposition to mulattoes was all the more pathetic because

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[133]Blyden to Coppinger, 20 Aug. 1881, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 1.

[134]Blyden to Coppinger, 3 Sept. 1881, Ibid.

he could not or would not act against them: in the election of 1881, for instance, he supported the two mulatto candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency instead of the two Negro candidates.[135] And when a vacancy occurred on the Board of Liberia College Trustees, he supported the candidature of R.A.Sherman, an octoroon and a former bitter opponent of his, in a deliberate attempt to appease the mulattoes.[136]

But if Blyden was tactless, if he did not know how best to husband the resources at his command, he was, nonetheless, conscientious and with clear and strong views of what was good for Liberia College. He reiterated these at every opportunity. One such occasion was in his first annual report to the Board of Trustees, a duty which his predecessors in office had completely neglected. It was a report of an "unusual character" owing to the "peculiar circumstances of Liberia". In it he made yet another plea for greater support of Liberia College; he saw it as the key to universal education in Liberia, and this in turn was "essential and indispensable" for "healthful inward growth as a republican constitutional government; and for healthful outward growth - as we advance into the interior - safely to absorb and assimilate the aboriginal elements".[137] Liberia College was also the only

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[135] Monrovia Observer, IV,(12 Aug. 1881).

[136] Blyden to Coppinger, 20 Jan. 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 2.

[137] Report of the President to the Board of trustees, Liberia College, Monrovia (Cambridge, Mass. 1882), 4.

means in the country of providing "Culture which would not only give mental strength, but wide views of duty in the country and for the race". Blyden now believed that leadership of the race must come from educated Africans themselves rather then from returning New World Negroes who were miseducated for the task in Africa. He reminded that

> "We are a Negro nation, having a new and important role to play in world history, and in the history of this great continent.... That we have not had the advantage of culture will furnish no excuse for us when we show incompetence in dealing with great national questions."[138]

He counselled that Liberians should not despair unduly because Liberia College had passed through "great trials": it was by no means unique in this: all the now great American Universities (Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth and Cornell) had passed through similar difficulties. He pointed to evidence which might suggest that Liberia College was about to leave its difficulties behind: the government had taken a new interest in the College; a respectable addition had been made to the library as a result of the generosity of American donors; Benjamin Anderson, the Liberian explorer, had been hired as tutor in mathematics; while he himself had taught Arabic and had played host for a month to a learned Mohammedan scholar, the Imam of Musahdu, and his four students.[139]

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[138] Report of the President to the Board of trustees, Liberia College, Monrovia 9.

[139] Ibid., 6.

For the future he still saw it as indispensable that the College should be removed to the interior, and endowed with a thousand acres of land, which would provide the opportunity for agricultural and industrial training.

If looking back on his first full year in office, critics could point to his unwise involvement in Liberian politics, his tactless opposition to mulattoes, his censorship of "modern history" in the curriculum of studies at Liberia College, they had to confess, too, that he had infused new life into the College and had stimulated new interest in the College in West Africa and abroad.[140] An example of this effort was the circular letter he sent in June to Presidents of several Colleges in the United States asking them to give their help to Liberia College in any way they thought best.[141]

Early in the first term of the new academic year Blyden announced that the College had decided to award twelve honorary degrees. The list reflected Blyden's personal choice: it was comprised of two white men who had had an important influence on his early life, and ten men of colour (mainly "pure Negroes") who had reflected credit upon the race. Blyden was very careful "to guard the power of granting degrees against abuse".[142] The degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on nine

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[140] Monrovia Observer, IV,(23 June, 1881).

[141] Report of the President to the Board of Trustees, 20.

[142] Blyden to Coppinger, 20 Jan. 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 2.

persons: Rev. John Peter Knox, Blyden's childhood mentor and friend; Rev. David Agnew Wilson, his teacher and friend in his first years in Liberia; the Rev. James W. Horne, a former principal of Monrovia Academy, a Baptist secondary schod; the Rev. Alexander Crummell, a former close associate of Blyden's in Liberia and a strenuous vindicator of the Negro race; John H. Smyth, United States Minister to Liberia and a strong supporter of Blyden's Negro policy; His Lordship James T. Holly, Bishop of Haiti and an ardent lover of his race; Professor Richard Greener, a highly respected coloured American scholar; Professor W. S. Scarborough, the leading Negro classical scholar in America and a sympathizer of efforts to colonize American Negroes in Liberia; and H. R. W. Johnson, a leading Liberian and a former Professor at Liberia College. Three persons, all Liberians, received the degree of Doctor of Divinity: James S. Payne, a Presbyterian clergyman and ex-President of the Republic; Charles . Pitman, an able Methodist minister; and Alfred B. King who had succeeded Blyden as Principal of Alexander High School.

Eight new students, two of them mulattoes, were admitted into the College for the new academic year. Blyden was pained that there were qualified Negro students whom he could not admit because scholarships were not available for their upkeep at the college; he himself had undertaken to support two new boys every year.[143] As usual, he omitted no opportunity to create interest in the College among for-

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[143]Blyden to Coppinger, 4 May, 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 2.

eigners as well as Africans. Distinguished visitors were taken on tours of the College and acquainted with the new efforts to establish a thriving institution. Sometimes they were surprised to find that a Negro was the President: Blyden told the story of officers of the U.S. ship "Galena" who were shown around the College by him and who, at the end of the tour, asked to see the President.[144] Among Negro visitors whom Blyden was proud to show the College was Henry Highland Garnet, the new U.S. Minister to Liberia.

Despite local criticism, Blyden had continued as a Minister of the Government, while remaining President of the College. Gardner had been re-elected in 1881 and when he formed his new Cabinet in January 1882, Blyden was confirmed in his positinn as Minister of the Interior. Once again Gardner had reaffirmed his intention of giving priority to opening up the interior. And once again Blyden had congratulated and encouraged him in this decision. He had written:

> "The great mission of Liberia, it has always seemed to us, is to spread the light of civilization and Christianity into the heart of Africa, as well as to rear a respectable and efficient nationality as an asylum for the oppressed of the race ....
>
> All the great nations of the civilized world are looking to Africa; and the opening up of that country will add to the material and moral life of the world."[145]

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[144]Blyden to Coppinger, January 19, 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 1.

[145]Blyden to Gardner (Copy, no date), Ibid.

But Blyden's enthusiasm, notwithstanding, Liberia did not possess the financial or human resources for opening up the interior.

As Minister of the Interior, he had once again to grapple with the problem of the settlement of Liberia's north-western boundary. The British, too, would have the dispute settled, but Liberians were unhappy about the method which the Sierra Leone Government was employing: on 20 March, 1882, Sir Arthur Havelock went to Monrovia with four gun-boats, and demanded that the Liberian Government consent to have its boundary delimited at Marfur in the vicinity of Cape Mount.[146] The British had by now given up all pretence of protecting the rights of the natives in the disputed territory and was now seeking to annex it to Sierra Leone. Governor Havelock was making the contradictory claim that Liberia had no rights to this territory while at the same time demanding that the sum of eight thousand five hundred pounds be paid to British traders as indemnity for native attacks on their property. President Gardner, overawed by this show of British "big-stick diplomacy", hastily appointed Blyden and William M. Davis, Attorney-General, to treat with the British Governor. After a conference lasting five days, the Liberian commissioners practically capitulated: they agreed that Liberia should abandon her claims to territory west of the Marfur River with Sir Arthur, not wishing to be ungenerous, promising that he would

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[146]Johnston, Liberia, 278.

intercede with the British Government for the line of the Mano River instead.[147] Mainly on Blyden's advice President Gardner agreed to the decision of the commission and the treaty was signed.

This decision aroused fierce opposition in Liberia: meetings of protest were held and threats made on the lives of members of the Cabinet. The Liberian Senate, hurriedly summoned, refused to ratify the treaty. Blyden, of course, stood at the very centre of the controversy. It was he more than any one else whom Liberians held responsible for easily abdicating the rights of the Republic. Indeed, it was charged that he had been bribed by the English to do so.[148] While there is no evidence that this was so, Blyden and Davis had undoubtedly conceded territories which the Liberians had consistently claimed to be theirs. But Blyden's action could be reasonably explained if we remember that unlike other Liberians he regarded the boundary between Liberia and Sierra Leone as an artificial and temporary one: he was confident that Liberia would yet absorb Sierra Leone. He thus saw his task as Liberian Commissioner to bring the dispute to an end at any cost. Nonetheless the fury of the Liberians was understandable, and once again he had to flee from their wrath. When the furore was raised even President Gardner

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[147] Johnston, Liberia, 279.

[148] King to Coppinger, 5 April 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 1.

put the blame on Blyden for easily relinquishing Liberia's territory; a censure for which Blyden was unprepared. He complained to Coppinger: "I cannot remain with a man who can be so treacherous - a man I have so faithfully served writing his public documents and official letters so as to give the Republic some reputation through him!".[149] As in his other moments of despair, Blyden saw himself as a martyr; he felt "honoured that God had honoured him to bear the cross and odium of helping to save Africa".

Blyden had sought refuge at Cape Palmas and, typically, he looked upon this visit as "providential": he found that the community here was without mulattoes, and being "untrammelled by alien influences", possessed "the power of race righteousness... (and) ... the true germ and basis of nationality".[150] He was pleased to find "intelligent educated natives" who "adhered to native customs as to dress etc". Thus, Cape Palmas had presented him with a new sign of Liberia's progress that he seemed always to be so desperately seeking. And again, typically, he pledged to pay special attention to the development of this area: he would use his influence to have emigrants sent out there as well as have educational facilities in the area increased.[151] But like so many of the plans he conceived nothing came of it.

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[149]Blyden to Coppinger, 26 April 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 20, Pt. 1.

[150]Blyden to Coppinger, 18 April 1882, Ibid.

[151]Blyden to Coppinger, 26 April, 1882, Ibid.

Blyden, of course, had been forced to resign from his ministerial position and, on his return to the College, began full time duties as President. But after only five weeks he left for the United States in an attempt to raise enough funds to remove the College into the interior, increase its facilities and add a female department. He spent nine months in the United States in this and other pursuits.

While in New York he sought to persuade the trustees of funds for the education of American youth who intended to work in Liberia to transfer these funds to Liberia College. He argued that these youths could best be educated on the scenes of their future labours.[152] The New York Board of Trustees were sympathetic to this point of view and made an appropriation of money for him to visit those institutions where their beneficiaries were studying and report to them with a view to transfer of both students and funds to Liberia College.[153]

Before leaving for the Southern Negro Colleges, Blyden visited Boston where he met members of the Liberia College Board of Control. But he "was astonished at their ignorance of Liberia College": he concluded that they could not have read his reports nor the news of the College which appeared in the African Repository: for instance, they still believed "that only three or four students attended the College". Here he saw fully the disadvantage of foreign control of Liberia by well-meaning but prejudiced and ill-informed men. Blyden knew that the Boston

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[152]Blyden to Coppinger, 6 Sept. 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 248.

[153]Blyden to Coppinger, 13 Oct. 1882, Ibid.

Board of Trustees had rather reluctantly confirmed his appointment as President of Liberia College, and now feared that they were looking upon Liberia College as an unnecessary rival to American Negro Colleges.[154] But he was able to impress upon them with success that the College had an important part to play in the development of Liberia; and his recommendation that the College should be removed into the interior and a female department added, was assented to.[155] The question of staff was discussed and three new appointments made: Hugh Mason Browne as Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, Thomas Mc Cants Stewart as Professor of History and Law, and Jennie E. Davis as head of the female department.

On leaving Boston, Blyden went South and spent some five weeks visiting Negro Colleges in Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia. During this tour twenty-six students including twelve from Hampton Institute, Virginia, agreed to transfer to Liberia College. He reported that there was great interest in Liberia College among coloured students; he was happy at the decision of those who had consented to transfer to Liberia College and he hoped that this would "divert all funds of the New York Society to Liberia and make the College a great centre of learning on the coast".[156]

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[154]Blyden to Coppinger, 28 Sept. 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 248.

[155]Allen, Trustees of Donation for Education in Liberia, 41.

[156]Blyden to Coppinger, 5 Jan. 1883, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 250.

Blyden returned to Monrovia on 3 June, 1883, after a long stay away from the College which must have provided further grounds on which his opponents could attack him. And yet his mission to America was successful, and with the staff, students and funds which were to follow him, his return might well have marked a new and progressive period for the College. But this was not to be so. The arrival of the two Professors in Monrovia on August (7) after fund-raising tours in the United States and England inaugurated another era of dissension and discord in Liberia College and all Monrovia. The two Professors were mulattoes and on this ground Blyden had at first objected to their appointment but had given in when the American Boards of Trustees counselled him to judge a man on his merit rather than on his colour.[157] Blyden had even made a resolve to co-operate with mulattoes in Liberia.[158] But he could not overcome his almost automatic prejudice against them,[159] and it must have been clear to the Professors even before they left the United States that Blyden did not consider them suitable for the appointments they held.

So soon after their arrival did the rupture between Blyden and the two Professors take place, that they did not teach even for one day in the College. The Professors were, no doubt, encouraged to return.

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[157] Blyden to Coppinger, 8 Dec. 1882, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 249.

[158] Blyden to Coppinger, 19 Sept. 1883, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 21, Pt. 1.

[159] Later he wrote to Coppinger: "I get more and more impatient with the obstructive efforts of the mulatto. I cannot escape my contempt for them", see Blyden to Coppinger, 13 Mar. 1884, Ibid.

Blyden's antipathy after quickly finding out that he had powerful enemies in Monrovia. They grew audacious quickly and before long recommended to the Boston Trustees that the College should be closed down: they maintained that there was nothing to do: the Professorships were sinecures.[160] They found Blyden an easy target to hit. Blyden, for his part, charged the Professors with "contempt for the College" and "a desire to have management of things in their own hands".[161] Similar recriminatory correspondence reached the New York Board of Trustees.

The conflict reached a climax in January, 1884, at a meeting of the Liberia Board of Trustees where he found himself with very little support. Stewart and Browne who were present "Attacked Blyden with unrestrained abuse".[162] H. R. W. Johnson, the new President of the Republic, was himself present at the meeting and sided with the Professors against Blyden. Following this meeting, Browne, changing his mind about closing the College, submitted a plan for its reorganization with Johnson as President. And now even such former supporters of Blyden as Smyth had found it difficult to support his intolerance for mulattoes. Finding himself thus isolated and without support or sympathy, least of all from his mulatto wife,[163] Blyden, to the chagrin of his friends and supporters everywhere, abandoned his post at Liberia College and sought

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[160] Blyden to Coppinger, 13 March, 1884, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 21, Pt. 1.

[161] Ibid.

[162] King to Coppinger, 19 Jan. 1884, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 21, Pt. 1.

[163] Blyden to Coppinger, 9 July 1886, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 23, Pt. 1. He wrote thus: "My family has been the chief source of my difficulties and perplexities. When I left my post at the College in January 1884, it (cont.)

solace in Sierra Leone.

The dispute in Liberia had initially caused a division in America, too. At first, the Boston Board had shown sympathy for Blyden, while the New York Board tended to believe the charges brought by the Professors against him. But his inability to bring the dispute to an end and make use of the new Professors at the College, and finally, his leaving the College for Sierra Leone had alienated whatever support he had had. In March, the Boston Board of Trustees had threatened to stop further appropriations of funds for the College unless the differences between the President and the Professors were reconciled.[164] In April, Stewart returned to the United States and his report to both Boards of Trustees had served further to undermine Blyden's position. At a meeting on 8 June, the Boston Board of Trustees decided to suspend Blyden' because of his long absence from the College. Faced with this censure, he tendered his resignation.

The end of Blyden's Presidency, and particularly the manner of this end, had keenly disappointed his friends and admirers everywhere. By his intellectual ability, his initiative and industry, he had raised hopes that Liberia College would yet firmly establish itself; by his intolerance, lack of tact and his inclination to dilute his efforts by pursuing simultaneously too many activities, he had ensured that this

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163 (cont.)
was not on account merely of the Professors, but I was driven from my home by an unsympathetic and abusive wife who will allow me to occupy no position in peace".

164 Allen, Trustees of Donation for Education in Liberia, 55.

would not be so under his Presidency. Ironically, not a single student graduated under his Presidency: the first graduation ceremony was due to take place in December, 1884: by March, all the Senior boys, perturbed by all the wrangling in which Liberia College was involved, left to seek employment; two months later Blyden's resignation officially ended his connection with the College.

Sierra Leone had now become the regular refuge of Blyden from the wrath of Monrovians but his first loyalty remained to Liberia. With the loss of the Presidency of Liberia College, he pondered how best he could serve the Republic and reluctantly came to the conclusion that he could do this as its President. Ever since his return to Liberia in 1879, after serving as Liberia's ambassador to the Court of St. James, his friends both in Liberia and Sierra Leone had urged him to contest the Presidency of the Republic. But he had declined to do so partly because he thought that he could more effectively devote himself to education, partly because he felt that his plans for Liberia could only be executed under a revised constitution which, among other reforms, made the Presidential term at least four years. Now he had changed his mind and stated his new position thus: "I have no desire to be President of Liberia - but I have a desire to take a position or do anything that will enable me to contribute effectively to the success of that Negro state".[165] He rationalized that if he deserved to be

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[165]Blyden to Coppinger, 30 Sept. 1884, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 21, Pt. 2.

President it was to put "Educational matters on a more solid footing".

As much else in Blyden's career, it was ironical that it was the Republican Party - the one dominated by mulattoes and against which he had inveighed so hard and so long, that nominated him as a candidate for the Presidency. The party seemed to have made a special effort to win his allegiance by deciding on a programme which coincided with Blyden's known views. The party platform claimed that it desired that "Liberia cut loose from its hampering prejudices and work for national prosperity on a line with the advanced ideas and forward movements of the present century".[166] In accepting the nomination of the Republican party an embarrassed Blyden sought to belittle the significance of party politics in Liberia: "The phrases," he wrote in his letter accepting the nomination, "in Liberian politics of 'Whigs and Republicans' have no especial significance ... but your platform indicate a desire ... to take a new departure - to act upon lines so distinct and pronounced as to mark a new era in the political history of Liberia".[167] But Blyden did fear that he might become the tool of a class of men that he despised: this, no doubt, was what prompted him to come to the unconvincing conclusion that, because the leading Republicans throughout the Republic had agreed on his nomination, if he were elected President, he would not have owed his "elevation to any clique in any section of the

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[166] Methodist Herald, 111 (25 March 1885).

[167] Ibid.

State"; for Blyden knew that "the man who owes his elevation to a clique must be the servant of that power that made him",[168]

Blyden's main plans for Liberia were: the repealing of restrictive laws against foreigners; attempting to attract foreign investment, while keeping it under judicious control; alliance with the natives and the extension of Liberia's jurisdiction interiorward; and finally, attempting to extend the President's term to at least four years. His plan for extension of Liberia's foreign and commercial relations was easily more extensive than that of any other Liberian Presidential candidate: it included sending representatives to Belgium, Germany and England to further stimulate the interest of these countries in commercial activities in Liberia and at the same time to secure a pledge from these governments "against aggressiveness from their subjects in case of large commercial privileges being granted to them".[169]

To implement his policy he must first win the election. Unluckily for him, he could hardly have had a more formidable opponent: Hilary R. W. Johnson, son of the illustrious ElijahJohnson, a haughty, hot-tempered, but able and politically astute man. He had already served one term as President, the first Liberian-born to do so, and he was now seeking re-election. The contest between these two able Liberians was bound to be heated as they were bitter enemies. It had not always

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[168] Methodist Herald; 111 (25 March 1885).

[169] Blyden to Coppinger, 10 July 1885, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 22, Pt. 1.

been so. They were both Negroes and as youngsters they had attended the same classes at Alexander High School and later had taught at Liberia College together. A rift first came between them over Liberia's relations with foreigners: Blyden was against the closed-door policy of the Republic, Johnson was one of its ardent supporters; Blyden favoured an active foreign policy for Liberia with the establishment of key Liberian embassies, Johnson thought this unnecessary: he had strongly disapproved of Blyden's appointment as Liberian ambassador to the Court of St. James. In 1882 he had severely criticized Blyden for easily conceding Liberia's rights to its northwest territories; and finally in Blyden's dispute with the new Professors at Liberia College Johnson had strongly supported the latter.

Now the duel between the two men was being carried on in the Presidential campaign. But here again Blyden was at a serious disadvantage: his frequent absences from the Republic were made to appear as instability; his pro-British proclivities as unpatriotic; his wish to open Liberia's door to large-scale commercial activities by foreigners as an unnecessary and dangerous step. Nor did Blyden possess the flair for politics: he was too forthright - he could never pander to the prejudices of the people, too idealistic, and lacking in organizing ability. The scholarly Blyden saw himself in the role of Plato's philosopher-king, owing allegiance to no one section of the community and expecting no criticisms from citizens who were not nearly so well-qualified as he for the vocation of governing.

He had been accustomed to think of himself as a "providential agent" and perhaps he believed that there might have been a divine intervention on his behalf. At any rate, on the eve of this hotly contested election he composed a poem in which he hoped that God would "send salvation at the polls" and "scatter the darkness of the land" by electing him President.[170] But God did not answer his prayer: Johnson won the election easily. Blyden consoled himself that "the intelligent portion of the people" had voted for him and left once again for Sierra Leone.

In the years under discussion, Blyden had proved himself most effective as a writer and vindicator of the Negro race. His diplomatic mission, too, had been successful: by his general demeanour he had at least created tolerance for the Negro Republic and perhaps even had enhanced its prestige. He had been least effective in his work in Liberia - where his intense dislike of mulattoes, his advanced and unconventional views, and his own self-righteousness, were obstacles in the way of his realizing his own goals. But no failure could make him less devoted to the pan-Negro idea.

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[170] A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 22, Pt. 1, No. 86: Poem: "Just Before the Battle".

Chapter Six

BLYDEN: EUROPEAN POWERS IN AFRICA AND THE PAN-NEGRO GOAL

As we have already seen, Blyden had believed that Europeans had a secondary role to play in Africa as a pan-Negro agency, the principal role to be played by New World Negroes. He had especially wished the British to extend their influence and jurisdiction in West Africa and he had envisaged them cooperating with the Liberians in establishing an English-speaking but distinctively African civilization. Influenced by the tradition of British humanitarianism, and by the recommendation of the 1865 Parliamentary Committee, Blyden yearned to see the British in the role of overlord and mentor in West Africa: he wanted them to employ their power to pacify the Western Soudan, use their influence in eradicating the retrogressive aspects of African life while leaving untampered with the wholesome fabric of African society; and yet ensuring that Africans remained essentially in control of their own affairs. Assured of such benevolent British over-rule, African chiefs and monarchs, so Blyden believed, would cooperate with their benefactors in developing the Western Soudan. Out of this new dispensation would come for the African, ultimately, a major and thriving West African state, and for the British an enhanced humanitarian reputation, and financial rewards as a result of vastly increased trade in the area. Such were Blyden's thoughts on the role of the British in

West Africa. It was for the most part wishful thinking: the British had shown a marked disinclination to undertake so ambitious and expensive a project; and his hope, on the one hand, that the British would be altruistic in dealing with Africans, and his assumption on the other, that in penetrating the Western Soudan they could peacefully win the cooperation of African chiefs, was a serious miscalculation as the history of European penetration and partition of West Africa was to prove.

If, before its partition Blyden wished to see the British extend their influence in West Africa, he had hoped to see that of the French curbed. This was so not only because he preferred English rather than French as a common language for West Africans, but more importantly, because he knew that the French had pursued a policy of assimilation in their older colonial territories often with disastrous results to native life.[1] He genuinely feared that, unlike the British, the French would regard African territory as an integral part of metropolitan France, and would attempt to impose French civilization upon it and so obliterate African laws, customs and institutions.[2]

It must, therefore, have been with mixed feelings that Blyden received the news of the Berlin Conference on West Africa (15 Nov. 1884 -

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[1]For a discussion of this see Stephen H. Roberts, The History of French Colonial Policy (London, 1963), Chapter IV: "General Native Policy", 95-123.

[2]C.O. 267/362/2734. Sir Samuel Rowe to Col. Fred A. Stanley, 21 Jan. 1886, enc. Blyden to Rowe, 22 Oct. 1885. The views of Blyden discussed in next three pages are taken from this source.

26 Feb. 1885), for it meant not only that European rivalry had been transferred to the African continent, but that, with the French and the late-coming Germans fighting for their "place in the sun", much of West Africa would come under non-British control - a contingency that he regarded as a drawback to the unity and development of West Africa. Eight months after the end of the Berlin Conference Blyden made yet another attempt to persuade the British to expand territorially in West Africa and in particular to annex the hinterland of Sierra Leone. This annexation, he argued, was necessary to forestall the French who were making "great efforts to establish a protectorate over the whole of the region of the country between Senegal and Timbuctoo and to cut off British influence from the Mohammedan tribes" who were "the most intelligent, wealthy and powerful in Western Nigrita"; it would also guarantee the economic prosperity of Sierra Leone by ensuring that trade would flow uninterrupted between the coastal colony and its hinterland. He recalled the long and persistent efforts of native merchants,[3] led by such well-known figures as William Grant and Samuel Lewis, to persuade the British Government to bring under its protection the country to the interior of Sierra Leone. He quoted Governor Rowe himself as being in favour of such a policy. He noted that the tribes in the hinterland had "a positive feeling of friendship for the British", and since

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[3]See Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 401, 451-2.

the widespread conquest of the Mohammedan warrior, Samori, were all the more anxious to "find refuge under a strong and regular Government". He reminded that Samori himself, in need of support to combat French expansionism in the western Soudan, had expressed a desire to place his empire under British protectorate; and that the King of Segou had expressed a desire for close commercial links between Sierra Leone and his kingdom.

For the development of the areas to be annexed Blyden had suggestions which included his favourite scheme - the emigration of American Negroes to West Africa. He proposed that the British Government, in cooperation with the American Colonization Society, colonize American Negroes in "the Koranko, Limba, Loko and Timmanee countries [where] there are millions of acres of beautiful and fertile lands, capable of producing all the tropical articles valuable in trade which are uninhabited and uncultivated". His was an ambitious pan-Negro plan: he felt that the United States could spare three of its seven million Negroes, but he would be content "if say one-tenth (700,000) could be secured". Anticipating objection to his plan on financial grounds, he argued that such colonization would open "safe and permanent markets" for the produce of British manufacture and would "in a short time take from the British government the whole burden of local expenditure". Blyden played on "the sense of justice and fairplay" of the British: "It would be interesting to see", he remarked, "England making openings for the return of the exiles who choose

to come, when we consider that for thirty years during the last century, under the Asiento contract, England had the monopoly of carrying natives from Africa to the Western hemisphere". Always appealing to the "humanitarian instincts" of the British, he pointed out the advantages to the natives of such a colonization scheme:

> "The existence of such a community among the natives in the enjoyment of the benefits of civilization would excite among its civilized neighbours, a desire to participate in those blessings, and would be at once a normal and modest society gradually spreading to the remotest regions and calling forth the resources of a country rich in so many things essential to commerce."

Finally, remembering the cool reception he had received from the Colonial Office to such schemes in the past, Blyden proposed that "If in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government the time has not yet come for Government action in the matter, that the attention of philanthropists and capitalists be called to it".

Blyden's scheme won the sympathy of A.W.L.Hemming, Principal Clerk at the Colonial Office, and a member of the British delegation at the Berlin Conference. Hemming felt there "was a great deal in his (Blyden's) ideas". That official envisaged no difficulty in colonizing American Negroes in the hinterland of Sierra Leone. With patronising presumption, he thought that Liberia had failed because "American Negroes were not fit to govern themselves", but "under a settled government, such as of this country, the drawbacks and mistakes which have so hampered the progress of Liberia, would not be felt". He confessed, though, that

the preliminary step of annexation was too expensive to contemplate. He regretted this because he believed that hesitation to act would "end in our being cut off by the French and Germans from the interior and therefore losing our trade and revenue".[4] R. H. Meade, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, summed up official attitude when he succinctly commented: "Annexation is out of the question. We have neither the armed forces or the means that would be required".[5] As Blyden had feared, the French were to circumscribe Sierra Leone by seizing its potentially rich hinterland.

Indeed, the Berlin Conference had been, in effect, the signal for the scramble for Africa. Even while the conference was in progress, German officials had sped out to West Africa in time to secure by hastily made treaties what was to become the German colonies of Togoland and the Cameroons. France, with a grand design for African empire systematically executed, was easily the greatest gainer territorially. First, consolidating her old claims on the West African coast and adding as much as she could by treaties made with African chiefs, she went on by a series of sustained military campaigns to conquer and control the Sudan from the Senegal to Lake Chad. The British Government, long opposed to a policy of territorial expansion, were stirred by the bustling efforts of the French and the Germans to assuming new imperial responsibilities

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[4] C.O. 267/362/2734. Colonial Office Minutes by A.W.L.Hemming.

[5] Ibid. Minutes by R. H. Meade.

on the Niger Coast and itself became an aggressive imperial agent when the energetic and powerful Joseph Chamberlain became Colonial Secretary in 1895.[6] The keen colonial ambitions of the two powers in West Africa had led to serious disputes over the Ilo-Bussa region on the banks of the Niger which had almost precipitated war. At any rate, by the end of the century the partition of West Africa had been complete. Despite the platitude uttered at the Berlin Conference (1885), and the Brussels Conference (1890) and the propaganda emanating from the European capitals about the humanitarian motives for European intervention in Africa, these powers were there primarily to promote their own interests.[7] In the staking out of their claims they had shown no regard for the African peoples on whom, too often, unnecessary and too ruthless war had been waged, whose leaders were often tricked, deposed and deported, and whose tribal unity suffered as a result of the artificial European division.

But with the partition of Africa a fait accompli, Blyden, characteristically, chose to believe that this was an act of Providence and was ultimately for the good of the African. He stated this most explicitly in 1903: "Our country has been partitioned, in the order ... of Providence, by the European powers, and I am sure that, in spite of all that

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[6] See J. L. Garvin, Life of Chamberlain, 1895-1900, (London, 1934), Vol. 3, Chapter XLVIII.

[7] S. E. Crowe, The Berlin West African Conference, 1884-85 (London, 1942), 103. Lamas Middleton, The Rape of Africa (London, 1926), 125-138.

has happened, or is now happening or may yet happen, this partition has been permitted for the ultimate good of the people, and for the benefit of humanity".[8] But he did not naively believe in the altruism of Europe. He recognized that Europe was attempting "to utilize Africa for her own purpose". But he also believed that "Providence used men and nations for higher purposes than they themselves conceived".[9]

Despite his vaunted belief that European rule in Africa was ultimately for the good of Africa, he realized from the start that that rule carried hazards with it. One of his fears was that European nations, particularly the French and the Belgiums, would attempt to colonize Africa with large numbers of their own people.[10] In his letters to friends in this period he showed his constant fear of European colonization of Africa when he kept reiterating that white men could not successfully colonize that continent.[11]

But his fear that Europeans might still attempt to colonize tropical Africa was never completely stilled. By the turn of the century there was high hopes that preventatives and cures would be found for those

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[8]Blyden, Africa and the Africans, 34.

[9]Blyden, The African Problem and Other Discourses (London, 1890), 22.

[10]There seemed to have been some basis for this fear: in 1893 a French syndicate, L'Union Coloniale Francaise, composed of leading French industrialists and bankers were formed and had as one of its principal aims encouraging emigration to the colonies, see Philip Neres, French-speaking West Africa (London, 1962), 16; the Belgian Mouvement Geographique had similarly sought to encourage European colonization of the interior of the Congo, see Ruth Slade, King Leopold's Congo (London, 1962), 71.

[11]Blyden to Coppinger, 2 July 1886, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 23, Pt. 1. and Blyden to C.T.O. King, Feb. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 1.

tropical diseases that had been so deadly to the European. In Britain schools of tropical medicine had been founded at London and Liverpool, through the influence and encouragement of Joseph Chamberlain[12] and Alfred Lewis Jones, shipping magnate and trader, and President of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce,[13] and were doing successful work in tropical medicine. Blyden feared that this otherwise desirable development might have disastrous consequences for the African. In a letter to E. D. Morel, the British journalist and reformer, Blyden praised the efforts of the British in attacking "bravely and with vast expenditure... the question of West African insalubrity", but he also confided his fears. He wrote

> "... the following thought naturally occurs to the thinking African acquainted with the history of Europe in relation to the darker races. When this immunity from malaria has been secured in West Africa and the European enjoys vigorous health and strength in this climate, how will he use this health? What will be his bearing towards the natives?"[14]

Blyden pointed out that in South Africa the European had always enjoyed vigorous health and the result was the subjugation of the natives.

Finally, Blyden had feared, too, that the rivalry among European nations which the scramble for Africa had at times exacerbated, might lead to a European war which would be partly fought out in Africa to the

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[12] Julian Amery, Life of Joseph Chamberlain, 1901-3 (London 1951), Vol. IV, 222-231.

[13] See A. H. Milne, Alfred Lewis Jones (Liverpool, 1914), 85-92.

[14] West African Mail, Vol. 1 (3 April 1903).

detriment of the natives there.[15] It was with great relief that he witnessed the Anglo-French entente of 1898.[16]

If he expressed misgivings about Europeans in Africa in his private letters, he was much more optimistic in his first public writings on the European partition of Africa. In 1895 he wrote of the European powers in Africa as "gradually repairing the waste places and teaching the natives to make the best possible use of their own country, by fitting it for the exiles in distant lands who may desire to return to the ancestral home".[17] Discarding his former distrust of the French, he had praise for their efforts in West Africa. He commended them for "exploiting and developing" the territories in their sphere of influence, and in particular for their conquest of Dahomey (1893) and the freeing of such "a great country from the cruel savagery of ages and throwing it open to the regenerating influences of enlightened nations". He applauded the fact that the "sons of powerful chiefs whom they conquered in the French Soudan were sent to France or North Africa for education", and he thought, hopefully, that this was to "fit them to take charge of their respective countries and govern them under French supervision in the interest of order and progress". Despite the fact that

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[15] Blyden to Coppinger, 5 Feb. 1889, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 26.

[16] Blyden, West Africa Before Europe and Other Addresses (London, 1905), 117.

[17] Edward W. Blyden, "The African Problem", North American Review CLXI (Sept. 1895), 328.

he certainly did have knowledge of Belgian atrocities in the Congo,[18] Blyden gave as his opinion that "Everyone has confidence in the philanthropic aims and practical and commercial efforts of the King of the Belgians in the arduous and expensive enterprise he has undertaken in the Congo". He thought that Germany, "considering her inexperience in colonial matters was developing astounding ability and resources".[19] He knew of the great public scandal caused by the brutality and immorality of Herr Leist in the Cameroons[20] but felt that his punishment was a "decided step in behalf of native protection".

Blyden lavished his indiscriminate praise on the British, too. He especially commended them for having declared a protectorate over the Niger delta. He had not "the slightest doubt, now that British enterprise under government protection had access to that region, that in the course of time those forests will be levelled, those swamps drained, and the soil covered with luxuriant harvests". He had praise for Sir Claude Macdonald, since 1 January 1891 "Her Majesty's Commissioner and Consul-General" of the Niger Coast Protectorate, whom he thought genuinely actuated by the interests of Africans:[21] He expressed his gratitude to the Liverpool commercial interest which he described as playing an important

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[18]Blyden to Coppinger, 24 May and 20 June, 1888, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 25, Pt. 2.

[19]Blyden, "The African Problem", 331.

[20]See Harry R. Rudin, The Germans in the Cameroon (London, 1938), 210-12.

[21]Blyden, "The African Problem", 330; cf. J.E.Flint, Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria (London, 1960), Chapter 5.

part in the economic development of British West Africa.[22] The only critical note he sounded was that against the Royal Niger Company which, contrary to its charter had set up a commercial monopoly and was ruthlessly eliminating the African middlemen. Blyden complained that under Company rule "the welfare of the natives may be sacrificed to the interest of the shareholders", and expressed the hope that the territory controlled by the Company would be taken over by the British Government. This was actually done in 1899. But perhaps that eulogy of European activities in Africa was due primarily to the fact that his audience was American and he didhot want to discourage American Negro emigration to that continent. It is significant that he had emphasized to his American audience that Europeans could not and did not intend to colonize Africa.[23]

Ironically, after the establishment of European rule in West Africa, it was, in Blyden's view, the French of all the imperial powers whose rule came closest to conforming with the interests of Africans. In early 1901 Blyden visited regions of the Ivory Coast that had been, prior to the Franco-Liberian treaty of 8 December 1892, Liberian territory, and so satisfied was he with "French administration upon the life and prospect of the natives",[24] that he was easily able to forgive France for

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[22]Blyden,"The African Problem", 331; cf. Milne, Alfred Lewis Jones, passim.

[23]Blyden, "The African Problem", 332.

[24]Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 11.

taking territory to which Liberia had strong claims.[25] In an address before the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce in September 1901, Blyden briefly reviewed European imperialism in Africa, praising the French and being critical of the English. Of the French he remarked:

> "France has a peculiar work to do in West Africa - a work much needed and suited to the genius of the Celtic race.... France is doing her part to pacify West Africa, to improve her material conditions, and to give an opportunity for permanent progress to the sons of the soil .... Africans would gladly cooperate with each nation according to the measure in which their systems accord with native ideas and native customs and traditions. And there seems to be more of this conformity in the French methods than in the more rigid and unimaginative system of the Anglo-Saxon."[26]

He had kind words too for the Germans:

> "The Germans have only recently entered the field, but, as apt pupils, have already mastered the situation. They are taking their part with intelligence, energy and capital. In commercial thoroughness and success only the English are their superiors. Their steamers are found in every inlet and outlet along the Coast. Their settlements in Togoland ... are becoming centres of trade ... Germany is in West Africa ... to give her desirable quota to its development and prosperity."[27]

Of the British whose influence he still wished to see predominate in West Africa he spoke with disappointment.

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[25]Johnston, Liberia, 283.

[26]Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 13-15.

[27]Ibid., 16.

> "If England, as the foremost power in West Africa, longer in the field and more abundant in labour and sacrifice - could rise to the full height of her magnificent Imperial destiny, which in Africa at all events might be easily fulfilled without fire and sword, but by the intellectual, moral and material influences, which she could bring to bear on the people, there would be no need of Ashanti, or Soudan or any other wars. Livingstone and other travellers have proved how amenable Africans are to other weapons than Maxim guns and Martini rifles. It has been fully shown that, if necessary, Africans can fight and fight effectively, but England, with her superior civilization and culture, not to mention her religion, ought never to allow it to be necessary. If war and fighting came, the fault is largely not in the natives who are everywhere more disposed to regard the representatives of Great Britain in the light of friends and guests, whose presence among them is a protection and ornament, than as masters and despots. British gold can do more for Africans than British arms."[28]

Undoubtedly, British colonial policy under Chamberlain tended to lay emphasis on the efficacy of the use of force in dealing with the natives rather than that of diplomacy and tact. The result was, often, the unnecessary destruction of native life and property,[29] but it is highly doubtful as Blyden implied that the imposition of British rule in West Africa could have been entirely peaceful.

In March 1902 Blyden visited Senegal and his good impression of French rule in West Africa was again confirmed. He wrote giving his impressions to his friend, E. D. Morel, and especially praising the continuity of French administrative policy and their fostering of native

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[28] Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 35.

[29] This theme is well brought out in J. C. O. Anene, The Establishment and Consolidation of Imperial Government in Southern Nigeria, 1891-1904 (unpublished M.A. thesis, London, 1952).

agriculture.[30] Blyden was impressed, too, with the French scheme of training and using of Muslim Negroes as officials. He reported that his guide during his stay in Senegal was Al Hajj Ahmed Sek, a Jaloff, "thoroughly educated in French and Arabic, and who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca". Sek took him to a Mohammedan Court over which presided Alkadi (Judge) Bakai Ba, by Blyden's account, a dignified, physically impressive and learned native, whose decisions in all civil and religious cases affecting his co-religionists, were final.[31]

Speaking before the African section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce on 16 June 1903, Blyden told of this visit to Senegal and praised French imperialism. He applauded their lead in building railroads, docks and wharves, and in fostering agriculture, all as part of an integrated plan for the economic development of French West Africa.[32] "While England hesitated", he chided, "France was covering her West African possessions with a network of high roads ... and now she is extending her railways in every direction, linking together French Guinea and Dahomey and the Ivory Coast".[33] He praised the French plan of educating the

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[30]Blyden to E. D. Morel, 15 Sept. 1902, Morel Collection, Misc.

[31]Edward W. Blyden, "Islam in the Western Soudan", Journal of African Society, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oct. 1902), 30.

[32]Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 106. For a discussion of French economic programme in West Africa, see Roberts, History of French Colonial Policy, 318-36.

[33]Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 116.

sons of African elites as leaders. He declared that the French were "far ahead in the necessary task of training co-workers and leaders" from among the Muslims. "These are the high-minded uses which the French in that part of Africa are making of Imperial power, so that whatever their faults they must command the respect and confidence of their Mohammedan subjects,"[34] he eulogised. It is worth noting that in addressing the African section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce Blyden was, in effect, addressing the Colonial Office as the former body had a considerable influence in the shaping of imperial policy in British West Africa.[35]

Ideally, Blyden wished to see France and England cooperating in "impressing a wholesome direction upon what must be regarded as the most critical period in the modern history of Africa". And in a fit of wishful hyperbole he believed that

> "the most important railway yet to be constructed in the cause of Africa and humanity, is that to be built by Great Britain and France conjointly, from Algiers to the Cape of Good Hope, the terminus on one side being in French territory, and on the other in English. Such an enterprise would make for the permanent peace not only of Africa, but of Europe."[36]

But in his realistic mood Blyden knew that close cooperation be-

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[34]Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 118.

[35]Milne, Alfred Lewis Jones, 27-30.

[36]Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 118.

tween France and Britain in Africa was not likely. And although he had the highest praise for French rule in West Africa, he still believed that from his pan-Negro point of view the British influence could be the most useful and wholesome. He advised the British Government to assume direct responsibility for the territory under the control of the Royal Niger Company, make an honest attempt to win the confidence of its Mohammedan population, and give an English training to a corps of them and use them in the British imperial service. Blyden himself had done what he could to prepare Muslims to cooperate with the British. Between 1887 and 1895 much of the time he spent in Sierra Leone was devoted to privately teaching English to select Mohammedan students.[37] In 1896, as Agent of Native Affairs in Lagos, he had been permitted to start a school at which Mohammedan youths were sent for "western training".[38] This school was a success and had brought requests for similar schools from such Mohammedan centres as Ibadan and Epe.[39] In 1899, he urged the Colonial Secretary to set up a major educational centre for Mohammedans in West Africa to provide an "intelligent and efficient corps of co-workers" in the British administration of Northern Nigeria.[40] Impressed with the facility with which Mohammedans

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[37] C.O. 147/142/11609, Governor George W. Denton to Joseph Chamberlain enc. 1. Blyden to Denton, 10 April 1899; also 267/471/25064, Blyden to R. L. Antrobus, 4 July 1903.

[38] Lagos Weekly Record, Vol. IX (14 May 1898).

[39] Ibid.; also C.O. 147/133/15374, Denton to Chamberlain, 11 June 1898j

[40] C.O. 147/142/11609, Denton to Chamberlain, 14 April, 1899, enc. Blyden to Denton, April 10, 1899.

travelled about, Blyden suggested that Mohammedans trained in English would spread British influence even beyond the sphere of the Government[41]- a factor that interested him more than it would the British Government. He had been perturbed by the war waged by the Royal Niger Company against the Emirates of Nupe and Ilorin in the early months of 1897,[42] but he assured that

> "In spite of some recent events, the Negro Mohammedans have deep reverence and abiding confidence in the intention and ability of the British Government to give them every possible assistance. They are not to be most effectually conquered or ruled by arms. Money and books, trade and literature, will do more to wh them to allegiance and devotion than any other agency."

Characteristically, Blyden emphasized that his educational scheme was "in close harmony" with Joseph Chamberlain's comprehensive scheme for the development of the British colonies.[43] He offered his services as Director of the educatinnal centre he had recommended.[44]

Officials in the Colonial Office were impressed by Blyden's letter and were sympathetic to his suggestion. Sir Charles Prestwood Lucas, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, thought Blyden "a man of high ideals but withal of sound and moderate views" and his proposal "a good one" but he had two reservations: first he wondered "whether the Mohammedans

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[41]C.O. 147/142/11609, Denton to Chamberlain, 14 April 1899, enc. Blyden to Denton, April 10, 1899.

[42]See Flint, Sir George Goldie, 243-63.

[43]For Chamberlain's views on Britain's relation to her colonies, see Garvin, Life of Chamberlain, 19-21.

[44]C.O. 147/142/11609, Denton to Chamberlain, 14 April 1899, enc. Blyden to Denton, 10 April 1899.

of the different colonies were sufficiently in touch with one another and with Sierra Leone in particular to make it a success", and secondly he feared "that whatever good results Dr. Blyden's personal force may be able to achieve, it will be very difficult to provide a successor to him".[45] Despatches were sent out to West African Governors in which the Colonial Office expressed its "appreciation of the importance of the object in view", and sought their opinion about the feasibility of the scheme.[46] Blyden's plea did finally result in his appointment in 1901 as Director of Mohammedan education in Sierra Leone but the educational scheme which he supervised was a very limited one and was certainly not intended for all West Africa. The entire department, which engaged twelve teachers, not including Blyden himself, was run on £600 a year. It was not surprising that Blyden remonstrated against the meagreness of the budget allowed to a department which he considered "one of the most important elements in the future of British administration in West Africa".[47] He made a second plea in 1903 for a West African Institution at Sierra Leone "for the secondary education of Mohammedans ... in Western ideas".[48] But nothing was done about this.

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[45] C.O. 147/142/11609, Denton to Chamberlain, 14 April 1899, enc. Blyden to Denton, 10 April 1899.

[46] Ibid. C.O. to West African Governors, Draft.

[47] C.O. 267/471/25064, Blyden to Antrobus, 4 July 1903.

[48] Ibid.

It was with the deliberate end of dispelling among the British the ignorance of and ingrained prejudice against Muslim Negroes, that Blyden began again writing about them. In September 1902 an article of his on "Islam in the Western Soudan appeared in the Journal of the African Society.[49] In it, he contended that there was then "no question of deeper practical interest to European powers ... than the question of Islam in the Soudan". In Britain "Public opinion to a most remarkable degree, had been attracted to that important region, recently brought within the British Empire". Yet, he claimed, Islam in the Soudan had not been studied by foreigners "with anything like insight or thoroughness". Blyden went on to prove, as he had done before, how superior an influence Islam was over Christianity in West Africa.

In another article, "The Koran in Africa", published in the Journal of the African Society, January 1905, Blyden again argued that West African Muslims would be glad to cooperate with the British if the imperialists were to remember that the Muslims strongly objected to the following: "the desocialising influence of the missionary method which breaks up family ties and disintegrates communities"; "caste arrangements which separate the missionary from the people"; and the countenance given by Christians to liquor traffic and liquor drinking.[50] In his lectures during his visits to England, Blyden did not neglect to plead for British

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[49]Edward W. Blyden, "Islam in the Western Soudan", Journal of the African Society, No. 5 (Oct. 1902), 37.

[50]Edward W. Blyden, "The Koran in Africa", Journal of the African Society, No. XLV (Jan. 1905), 168-69.

understanding of the Muslims and cooperation with them.[51]

In view of Blyden's belief that French colonial rule better promoted the interest of Africans than the British, it might be instructive briefly to compare them.[52] The British tended to view their colonies as societies separate from their own, evolving lives and interests of their own, and held out to them an eventual independent existence. As a result of this view there was a great deal of decentralization in the British colonial system. In the British system of indirect rule, as we have seen, the native authorities retained much of their power and influence. And in those parts where British institutions and laws were introduced, educated Africans were permitted along with European officials to participate in their operations. In contrast to this decentralized form of government was the highly centralized French colonial system. The French tended to look upon their colonies as an extension of metropolitan France and insisted on the maintenance of power in the hands of French executive officials under the ultimate and sole control of the French Minister for the Colonies. It was true that native rulers and officials formed the base of this centralized pyramid, but they enjoyed very much less power and influence than their British counterpart.

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[51] Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 100, 107.

[52] For a longer discussion of this see Roberts, The History of French Colonial Policy, 634-79; also E. Baillaud, La Politique Indigène de l'Angleterre en Afrique Occidentale (Paris, 1912), 540-546.

Thus looking at it from Blyden's point in time, it would seem as though British rule in many respects augured better for the future of Africans than the French. But Blyden was no doubt tremendously impressed by the scrupulous care which the French, albeit influenced by the latent force of Pan-Islamism and the absence of a permanent French population, took in respecting native institutions and customs. There was in no French territory any incident comparable to the Hut Tax Revolt of Sierra Leone in 1898 which was clearly precipitated by a lack of understanding of native life on the part of Governor Cardew and his officials.[53] In addition, Blyden was greatly impressed by lavish French spending on an integrated scheme for the economic development of French West Africa; the British spending on economic development in comparison seemed niggardly.

Blyden's praise for French colonial policy and his campaign to get the British to understand and cooperate with the Muslims was in reality part of a greater campaign in which he sought to impress upon European powers in Africa the need for a careful study of the African social system if they would rule wisely and to mutual advantage. Blyden had long maintained that Europeans could be useful in Africa only if they attempted to understand and respect African customs and institutions: he had admitted that there were some aspects of African life that needed reform, some customs that needed excision, but had pleaded that the basic African social system should remain intact. With European partition of Africa,

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[53]Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 550-56.

Blyden wrote more insistently, explicitly and urgently on the theme.

For long his almost solitary pleas that the African social system suited its inhabitants best under their own circumstances and was deserving of careful study met with no favourable response. The belief prevailed among Europeans in Africa that African culture was worthless or non-existent and should be replaced by a European one. But after European partition of Africa, and with more serious thought being given to the question of how best to rule the African natives, there arose a few Britishers who espoused Blyden's point of view. Perhaps the most outstanding of these was that unconventional Victorian Englishwoman, Mary Kingsley, scion of the literary, wanderlust Kingsley family, and herself a restless spinster who made two trips to French West Africa between 1893 and 1895. This intrepid feat deservedly brought her much attention and, from 1896 until her death in 1900, through her lectures and writings, she, more than any other person, commanded the close attention of all Britons associated with West Africa.[54] A powerful and indefatigable propagandist she brought West Africa very sharply to the attention of the British people.

Thus Miss Kingsley became a powerful ally of Blyden in the task of getting Europeans to understand and appreciate the African social system.

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[54]Olwen Campbell, Mary Kingsley (London, 1957), passim; also Stephen Gwynn, Life of Mary Kingsley (London, 1932), passim.

It is true that their views differed in two essential respects: whereas Miss Kingsley was a fierce champion of the rule of commercial companies in Africa,[55] Blyden was opposed to these and thought that the interests of the natives were better safeguarded under government rule emanating from the metropolitan powers, and he could not agree with Miss Kingsley's low estimate of the Negro contribution to world civilization, otherwise there was much common ground between the influential agnostic English woman and the highly educated Christian Negro: like Blyden, Miss Kingsley believed that the Negro had his own peculiar aptitudes; that his customs, laws and institutions were essentially sound and wholesome and that foreigners in Africa should attempt to understand and respect these; she castigated both the Colonial Office and missionary societies for their smug disregard on this point. Like Blyden she contended that the "true African" was found only away from the coast; that Mohammedanism had had a more beneficial effect on Negroes than Christianity: she contrasted the courtesy and self-confidence of the Mohammedan Negro with the brashness and insecurity of the Christian Negro.[56] Like Blyden, too, Mary Kingsley believed that Britain had every right to extend the sphere of her imperial influence in Africa, but this was to be done without jingoism or nauseating sentimentality. She wanted a relationship in which both

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[55] J. E. Flint, "Mary Kingsley - A Reassessment", Journal of African History, IV, 1 (1963), 95-104.

[56] Kingsley, West African Studies, passim.

sides would stand to gain; Britain, in material prosperity and the Africans in a generally improved mode of living. This was enough justification for British imperialism. And in this relationship there was no need to destroy native laws, customs and institutions; but there was every need to give the African the "fullest opportunity for self-development and self-advancement".

Mary Kingsley had become acquainted with some educated West Africans and Blyden was among these. Interestingly enough, her "last word" written on a sea voyage to South Africa was a letter to the editor of the New Africa, A. P. Camphor, at the end of which she commended herself "to my dear friend, Dr. Blyden". In that letter she had urged educated Africans to

> "place before the English statesmen the true African and destroy the fancy African made by exaggeration ... to forward and demonstrate that African nationalism is a good thing, and that it is not a welter of barbarism, cannibalism and cruelty."

By her vigorous campaign, Mary Kingsley had stimulated others to attempt to take a scientific view of African society.[57] And her influence continued beyond her death. For to commemorate her memory and to continue the work she had begun, the African Society was founded in London in June 1901.[58] The Society received strong support not only

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[57] Among other British writers on African society at this time were R.E. Dennett, Notes on the Folklore of the Fjort, with an Introduction by Mary H. Kingsley (London, 1898), and At the Back of the Black Man's Mind (London, 1906); Major Arthur Glyn Leonard, The Lower Niger and its Tribes (London, 1906); Dudley Kidd, The Essential Kafir (London, 1904), Savage Childhood (1906) and Kafir Socialism (1908); and Lady Lugard, A Tropical Dependency (London, 1904).

[58] Journal of African Society, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oct. 1901); Liberia Bulletin, No. 18 (Feb. 1901), 93-94.

from the commercial section she had championed but from the Colonial Office and the missionaries - two of the main butts of her criticisms; as well as the academic students of Anthropology. Blyden had become an enthusiastic admirer of Mary Kingsley and he had, of course, greatly welcomed the founding of the African Society; he was one of the original members and among its first Vice-Presidents. Blyden paid several public tributes to Mary Kingsley and her efforts at promoting a better understanding of African culture. In a speech before the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, he said:

> "Brief as my acquaintance with her I recognized in her a spirit sent to this world to serve Africa and the African race in a way in which it was not given to others to serve them... she saw that Great Britain ... might by accurate knowledge be prevented from inflicting in the prosecution of its work unnecessary evils upon races who come under its control. This knowledge on behalf of the African she strove to impart; and it is this knowledge which the African Society ... was established to diffuse."[59]

In his first contribution to the Journal of African Society, "Islam in the Western Soudan", he wrote thus of Mary Kingsley:

> "so far as Africa is concerned Miss Kingsley has created a new stand point for European thought. She has made it possible for African conditions, whether intellectual, social or religious, to be studied by outsiders with patience and without prejudice; and the impulse she has given that righteous direction will never be spent."[60]

And in his first speech before the African Society on 26 June, 1903, he continued his eulogy of Mary Kingsley:

> "Mary Kingsley was a providential instrument raised up in the course of human evolution to save Europe from imbruing her

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[59] Blyden, Europe Before West Africa, 3-4.

[60] Blyden, "Islam in the Western Soudan", 38.

> hands in her brother's blood. She dreaded the guilt of murdering native institutions, and thus if not actually destroying the people, impairing their power of effective cooperation with alien exploiters. Every race has a soul and the soul of the race finds expression in its institutions, and to kill those institutions is to kill the soul - a terrible homicide."[61]

The African Society he saw as

> "the harbinger of a great future for Africa. It is like the song of a nightingale after the long and dreary winter of misconception on the part of the foreigner, of woes innumerable on the part of the native. It is as yet on the threshold of the work to be done, and ought to be instrumental in exploding the fallacies which during the ages have hindered effective and beneficient results."[62]

In a speech before the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce in 1903, Blyden gave advice on the "two principles that should guide the policy of the Imperial Powers". First, "..encourage the development of the natives along the lines of their own idiosyncracies as revealed in their institutions". Secondly,

> "...give to the African ... all the advantages, in their spirit and effect, which as individuals or communities, as rulers or people, they would have enjoyed under native conditions. Do not deprive them of rights and advantages which they valued and enjoyed before you came, and which were in accordance with justice and equity, without making it clear to them that you give them their equivalent. The sense of justice is as keen in the African as in any one else."[63]

One of the problems which the Europeans in Africa faced was that of obtaining and utilizing adequate native labour. As a result of the slave trade, inter-tribal warfare and European-native military conflicts,

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[61] Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 140-141.

[62] Ibid., 130.

[63] Ibid., 140.

the West African population had decreased considerably, and hence there was a shortage of labour; in addition the natives were not accustomed to the regular and rigorous work that was required of them. The result was that forced native labour of varying degrees of harshness became prevalent in West Africa. Blyden deprecated this compulsory native labour. Writing in 1901 he pointed out that the use of forced labour in South Africa had had disastrous results for the natives and expressed the hope that "the conditions in South Africa should furnish no encouragement for the adoption in West Africa of any of the methods adopted by the enterprise of Europe towards the natives of that country".[64] And when the British Cotton Growing Association in 1903 announced plans for large-scale cotton production in West Africa,[65] Blyden felt compelled to give them a timely warning with regard to native labour: He wrote in the West African Mail:

> "Englishmen still don't know many "ordinary facts" about tropical Africa. So far as the cotton enterprise is concerned, if they do not learn these facts, failure - disastrous failure - must attend it.
>
> They must learn to uphold native authority in the country, and work through that authority to carry out their scheme."[66]

He protested against the supervision of native labour by British officials as suggested by the West African section of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. Study the native conditions of labour, Blyden advised.[67] It

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[64] Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, 30.

[65] Milne, Alfred Jones, 63-69.

[66] West African Mail, Vol. 11 (8 April 1904).

[67] Ibid.

was wrong to assume that the natives have always had to work for nothing: before the coming of the European they had worked in common and held all things in common. The chiefs were to be left to organize native labour.[68]

As an articulate exponent of African native interest, it might have been expected that Blyden would strongly and publicly condemn the well-known atrocities which were being perpetrated in King Leopold's Congo. And yet this was not the case. His one public attempt at a protest was at a dinner given in his honour by fellow Africans in London on 15 August, 1903. But this was a mild protest which merely referred to the "melancholy rumours of the treatment accorded to our people at the Congo by alien rulers".[69] He immediately went on to defend the Belgians whom he thought were "neither by taste nor by temperament... inhuman or cruel". He thought the intentions of the Belgians good, their methods bad.

Why did Blyden not more strongly castigate the Belgian regime? As Liberian ambassador to London in 1892 Blyden had spent a week in Belgium where he had been lavishly entertained and had been the luncheon guest of King Leopold himself.[70] In addition Blyden was a close friend of Alfred Lewis Jones, the West African trader and shipping magnate, whose generosity Blyden had often been the recipient of; but Jones was the consul in Liverpool for the Congo state, had large commercial interests

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[68] West African Mail, Vol. 11 (8 April 1904).

[69] Blyden, Africa and the Africans, 34.

[70] Sierra Leone Weekly News, Vol. VIII.

in the Congo and was well-known as a defender and apologist of the Belgian regime in the Congo.[71] It might be that Blyden's acquaintance of the Belgian monarch and his friendship with Jones had deterred him from a more outspoken condemnation of the Belgian Congo. But perhaps the main reason for his reticence was his belief that European nations were providential agents working for the regeneration of Africa, and retribution for their misdeeds would come from God, a view he expressed to his fellow Africans at the banquet in his honour in London in 1903.[72]

If Blyden regarded European powers in Africa as pan-Negro agencies, what was his attitude towards the threat which they posed to the very existence of Liberia? That Liberia survived at all was due to the mutual mistrust and jealousy of France, England and Germany (who had considerable commercial assets in the Negro Republic), and also to the timely interest displayed on its behalf by the United States of America. And yet Blyden had remained unperturbed by the threat of European powers to the territorial integrity of Liberia. Liberians had especially resented the unscrupulous action of France in circumscribing the Republic by seizing territory both in its hinterland and on its eastern coast to which Liberia had strong and legitimate claims. Yet while these French activities were taking place, Blyden sought to persuade Liberians to accept it with philosophic calm because, so he argued, it was in the best interest of the race. In 1897 he told a Liberian audience:

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[71] West African Mail, Vol. 1 (1 Jan. 1904).

[72] Blyden, Africa and the Africans, 45.

> "We must banish from our minds all apprehensions of sinister intentions or hostile influence on the part of that chivalrous nation (France). They are endeavouring in the interest of peace and in the interest of trade, to reduce to order refractory tribes. We must not deny... that friendly nation... an honest desire to improve the condition of the countries within their sphere of influence. We must recognize the spirit of humanity in their dealings with the people...." 73

Thus, Blyden recognized that as a pan-Negro agency in Africa, Liberia had failed and that the European nations were better qualified to fulfil this role.

But Blyden did not wish to see Liberia dismembered. He thought this could be prevented by a British Protectorate over Liberia, and in 1896 was an advocate of this.[74] Such a Protectorate, he hoped, would save Liberia as a territorial unit, and could implement a policy of development. But such a plan could not win the approval of Liberians and was bound to be strenuously opposed by France and Germany. However, by now Blyden had become convinced that the reforms that Liberia needed to make it a progressive country must come from outside. In 1905, as the special Liberian envoy to England and France, Blyden, on his own initiative, recommended to the two Governments that they should jointly present notes to Liberia suggesting the necessity for reforms and proposing to take such measures as would clear the Negro Republic of its debts and promote the economic development of the country.[75] Blyden wished France

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[73] Liberia Bulletin, No. 10 (Feb. 1897), 47.

[74] C.O. 147/107, Blyden to Carter, 10 Nov. 1896.

[75] F.O. 403/363/Confidential 8690, Memo. by Dr. Blyden on Liberian Situation.

and England to assure Liberia that its sovereign independence would not be impaired. But because the Liberian Government realized that such a Protectorate was incompatible with complete independence, it repudiated Blyden's authority to make the suggestions he did. It is interesting to note, though, that in 1912 Liberia submitted to an international receivership held jointly by the United States of America, Britain, France and Germany, which was intended to bring about the very reforms which Blyden had advocated. But if Liberia had finally consented to sacrifice part of her sovereignty for the sake of reform, the presence in the receivership of the United States was for her a guarantee that she would not lose her independence altogether, and would regain it completely.

Blyden had consistently maintained and acted on the assumption that European nations were agents working to make Africa a progressive continent. Yet he did not want Africa to be a black replica of Europe; he wanted it to be culturally distinctive -retaining as much of its customs and institutions as was compatible with the adoption of the best elements of western culture. He expected educated Africans to take the lead in understanding and explaining African culture and in bringing about a happy amalgam between it and an aggressive western culture which tended to overwhelm all before it. Blyden had also maintained, that European rule in Africa was temporary. His optimism was based on the belief that Europeans could not colonize tropical Africa, and that this fact would facilitate the withdrawal of Europeans as political overlords when they were no longer needed. In this history has proved him right.

Chapter Seven

BLYDEN AND A WEST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

Although Blyden talked and wrote in terms of all black Africa, his influence on that continent was confined only to West Africa. Since 1871 the Liberian had become an itinerant nationalist and propagandist in British West Africa, and particularly after 1885 spent more of his time at Sierra Leone and Lagos than in the Negro Republic. In this chapter we shall discuss his attempt to create a West African community spirit and foster West African nationalism.

We have seen that during his stay in Sierra Leone (1871-73), Blyden had edited the Negro which he regarded as a pan-Negro organ. This newspaper was discontinued in 1874, but in the same year William Grant, one of its proprietors, started, again with Blyden's help and encouragement, another newspaper. This was called the West African Reporter, and if this was a more modest title than the Negro, the newspaper was just as purposeful and probably much more realistic in its aim: to forge a bond of unity among English-speaking West Africans. In particular it sought to bring about a close relationship between Sierra Leone and Liberia. An editorial of 26 December 1876, declared that "Although Liberia and Sierra Leone were politically separate, the tie of race asserts its claim". It thought, perhaps hopefully, that "there was on the part of leading minds of the two communities a growing disposition to get together".[1]

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[1] West African Reporter, 111 (26 Dec. 1876).

Certainly, Grant and Blyden were making every effort to foster a closer relationship between the two territories. Initially, Blyden conceived of Liberia as being the focus of the new West African entity which he hoped would evolve. "The European settlements should stand in the relation of nurseries to Liberia",[2] he wrote to a friend in 1876. Significantly, it was on Blyden's invitation and as his guest that Grant first visited Liberia and spent a week in December 1876. At a tea party which Blyden gave for Grant and which was attended by several prominent Liberians, it was resolved that

> "the time has arrived, when there ought to be a contribution of negro talents and ability on the West Coast of Africa and elsewhere, for the elevation of our race morally, socially, politically; and, therefore we hail, with much delight, the publication of the West African Reporter, a paper enlisted in this work, and also extend a hearty welcome to its distinguished proprietor, the Hon. William Grant".[3]

At a dinner party at the President's mansion on the following evening, Grant urged "the importance of better understanding and closer connection between Sierra Leone and Liberia".[4] On his return to Sierra Leone Grant reported favourably of Liberia: he had seen there evidence of "thrift, industry and enterprise", and he called upon Sierra Leoneans to take a greater interest in the Negro Republic.[5]

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[2]Blyden to Lowrie, 3 Oct. 1876, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 2.

[3]West African Reporter, IV (24 Jan. 1877).

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

Blyden's influence in English-speaking West Africa first spread through his writings. As early as 1873, G. W. Johnson, Secretary of the Egba United Board of Management - a body comprised of educated Negroes and native leaders - wrote to a friend referring to "the able words of our Mr. Blyden".[6] Blyden's writings on Christianity and Islam in West Africa which had appeared in Fraser's Magazine was serialized in the West African Reporter. On reading them, James Johnson wrote congratulating him on his learned, wise and timely writings on behalf of the Negro race.[7]

Blyden's activities were faithfully reported in the Reporter. Thus, his appointment in 1877 as the Liberian Minister to the Court of St. James evoked the generous comment from the Reporter that "The much abused phrase the right man in the right place was at last appropriate".[8] It advised the Liberian Government to make permanent the legation which Blyden had opened.

Blyden returned from his diplomatic duties in London to Sierra Leone in late January 1879. His activities here again show him thinking in terms of a West African community. After a short visit to Liberia he took back with him to Sierra Leone Allen B. Cooper, "a black man of intelligence", a former member of the Liberian House of Representatives, and the most successful coffee cultivator in Liberia. Blyden encouraged

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[6]Quoted in Ajayi, Christian Missions and the Making of Nigeria, 611.

[7]James Johnson to Blyden, 16 Dec. 1876, P.B.F.M.Papers, Vol. 11, No. 265.

[8]West African Reporter, IV (7 Nov. 1877).

him to start a coffee plantation in Sierra Leone.[9] Together they made a tour of the Windward coast visiting the island of Matacong by way of the Melakori river and then on to the Rio Pongo. Although Blyden was an unexpected visitor, the young men there, at short notice, delivered an address of welcome to him praising him as a "champion of the Negro race" and congratulating him on being the first Liberian ambassador abroad.[10] Blyden was gratified to see young Africans taking such an "interest in events affecting the welfare of their race". He predicted that Africans would yet play an active part in shaping the events of the world. He stirred their racial patriotism when he said: "I would rather in view of the possibilities and the probabilities, be a member of this than of any other race".[11] Blyden also visited the Rio Pongo where West Indian missionaries had been at work since 1855. Everywhere he visited on this trip he found "native young men educated at Sierra Leone, engaged as clerks, book-keepers, factory keepers and independent traders", many of them "thoughtful and cultivated"; and he sought to persuade them to devote their energies to Liberia.[12]

On Blyden's return to Sierra Leone he wrote for the local papers there and again "renewed the idea among the leading natives of an African

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[9]Blyden to Coppinger, 23 April 1879, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 1. Hooper never did start his coffee plantation in Sierra Leone: he died shortly after his return to Liberia.

[10]West African Reporter, V (14 May, 1879).

[11]Ibid.

[12]Blyden to Coppinger, 19 May 1879, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 19, Pt. 1.

University or a College to be located in the mountain where the air was pure and healthy".[13] And, as we have seen, when he became President of Liberia College in 1880 he thought of it as a West African institution.

Grant, his staunchest ally in Sierra Leone died in January, 1882, while Blyden was still President of Liberia College. Grant had been a splendid example of an able, hard-working and race-conscious African - of whom, in Blyden's view, there were too few in West Africa. To Grant was attributed what was regarded as the Negro creed among English-speaking West Africans:

> "I believe in the Negro, pure and simple, the ebony image of God; within 'the bounds of his habitation' equal to any, superior to many. I believe in his black skin, his crisp hair, and in all his physical, mental and moral characteristics, when normally developed... I believe in his restoration from barbarism and superstition to civilization and Christianity."[14]

The sudden death of Grant at a relatively young age came as a graat shock to Blyden, who confessed that "The remembrance of my personal loss in the death of that African patriot is one of the shadows in my existence that will depart only when its earthly career ceases".[15] But it was more than a personal loss; to him "the whole Negro race had sustained an irreparable loss" in Grant's death.[16]

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[13] Blyden to Coppinger, 14 June 1879, Ibid.

[14] West African Reporter, VIII (25 Feb. 1882).

[15] Blyden, "Sierra Leone and Liberia: Their Origin, Work and Destiny", Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 236.

[16] West African Reporter, VIII (11 March 1882).

When Blyden severed his connection from Liberia College in 1884 he returned to Sierra Leone. Here he resumed his old activities: teaching, lecturing, writing. Grant's newspaper had out-lasted him two years. But at the time of the demise of the West African Reporter, Blyden was helping Rev. Joseph Claudius May, Principal of the Wesleyan Boys' High School, to found the Sierra Weekly News which was to be edited by May's brother, Cornelius, a trained printer and journalist. Blyden wrote periodically for the News as well as for the Methodist Herald (1882-88) also owned by J. C. May. The News was to become one of the important and successful newspapers of its time in West Africa.

While in Sierra Leone he continued to impress both upon Africans and government officials that Sierra Leone's future lay within a larger West African state of which Liberia, too, would be a part. In an important public lecture entitled "Sierra and Liberia: Their origins, Work and Destiny", chaired by the Hon. Samuel Lewis and attended by practically all the leading natives and the government officials,[17] Blyden frankly stated his view that "the two peoples are one in origin and one in destiny and, in spite of themselves, in spite of local prejudices, they must co-operate".[18] He was of the opinion that "Sierra Leone was really a Negro nationality under a British protectorate" and that "sooner or later the two countries would have to unite". Blyden urged that steps be taken to

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[17]Blyden to Coppinger, 29 April 1884, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 21, Pt. 1.

[18]Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 231.

prepare for this eventuality and suggested that one of the prerequisites was a greater degree of political independence for Africans in Sierra Leone. He wanted to see established in the colony "city corporations ... composed chiefly of natives". He warned Sierra Leoneans that if they continued "in a position of social or political disadvantage, it is because they themselves choose to acquiesce in it, and to foster those conventional opinions which suspect every attempt to push them a step forward in self-government, and to place upon them the responsibilities which that government involves".[19] He thought that the time had come for Africans in Sierra Leone to assert themselves politically.

Blyden was determined that the centenary of Sierra Leone should be fittingly celebrated. For more than any other reason he hoped that it would provide a dramatic opportunity for thinking West Africans to reflect on the path along which the race had travelled for the past one hundred years, as well as a point from which to plan for the future. If he could, he would have had representatives from all West Africa participating in the celebrations.[20] The celebrations were planned for June, 1887, but as early as August, 1886, a committee comprised of leading Africans and a few Europeans was formed to plan it. An ambitious programme was drawn up aimed partly at stimulating Negro pride and promoting Negro initiative. The plan was: to hold an exhibition of native arts and of the colony's industry and natural products; to erect busts of two Negro

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[19]Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, 248.

[20]Blyden to Coppinger, 14 May 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 1.

benefactors and of three outstanding local Africans in the Wilberforce Memorial Hall; to encourage the commencement of a model farm and industrial school; to erect a substantial memorial as a record of the centenary; and finally, as a demonstration of their loyalty to Queen Victoria, whose golden jubilee coincided with the colony's centenary, to erect a bust of her.[21] But the committee had difficulty in raising adequate funds and the celebration fell far short of what Blyden had hoped. As it was, no public memorial was raised, no busts of famous Africans erected. The exhibition itself, "ill-organized and inferior", was unworthy of the occasion.[22]

But Blyden had used the occasion to propagate his pan-Negro ideas. A historical play written by him was performed at the celebration. The characters in it - "Recaptives", "Nova Scotians", "Mohammedans", "Timneh Chief", and so on, represented the different elements in Sierra Leone society; Liberia was also represented.[23] These characters were merely the vehicles for the author's well-known views. The general theme was that all elements in West African society should work together at building up a distinctively African civilization. Blyden had also taken the opportunity of bringing "Liberia and Sierra Leone nearer together": through his encouragement several Liberians from Monrovia and the St. Paul's district

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[21] Sierra Leone Weekly News, 111 (4 Sept. 1886).

[22] Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 466.

[23] Sierra Leone Weekly News, IV (10 Sept. 1887).

attended the Sierra Leone celebration, some of them taking parts in the play.[24]

Partly to commemorate the Sierra Leone Centennial, partly to further stimulate the interest in West Africa which its exhibits at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 in London had aroused, Blyden agreed to the suggestion of Ernst Vohen, an enterprising German trader at Sierra Leone, to have a selection of his articles published in book form.[25] Significantly, this decision led to his resignation as a Presbyterian clergyman: he had anticipated that the criticisms of Christianity and praise of Islam in his book would be offensive to many Christians, and he wished to be an uninhibited "minister of truth".[26] Blyden's book, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, consisting mainly of articles which had appeared in print before, was published in the summer of 1887 with an introduction by the outstanding Negro lawyer from Sierra Leone, Sir Samuel Lewis. In England the first reaction of critics not personally acquainted with Blyden was one of astonishment or disbelief that the book could have been written by a Negro, and one whose formal education did not go beyond High School. The reviewer in the Athenaeum noted that "the most immediately noteworthy fact about this volume... is that its author is a Negro";[27]

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[24]Blyden to Coppinger, 14 May 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 1.

[25]Blyden to Coppinger, 4 Oct. 1886, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 23, Pt. 1.

[26]Blyden to King, 16 Dec. 1886, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 23, Pt. 2; also Blyden to Coppinger, 25 Jan. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 1.

[27]The Athenaeum, No. 3122 (27 Aug. 1887), 277.

the C.M.S. Intelligencer incredulously suggested that if Blyden's formal education stopped at High School, then "the teacher as well as the pupil could have been no ordinary man"; it regretted that Lewis had not given more details about Blyden's youth;[28] finally, a correspondent of Notes and Queries questioned Blyden's assertion that he was a "full-blooded Negro": the name Blyden suggested that he had at least "a strain of pure European blood". It was because the English critics found Blyden's book scholarly, challenging and stimulating thatsome of them were incredulous that he was a Negro. The most enthusiastic review of Blyden's book came from his friend, R. B. Smith. He wrote:

> "I regard... Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race... as one of the most remarkable books I have ever met.... Hitherto, no light has shone, no voice has come, audible at all events to the outer world, from Africa itself. It is in the pages of Mr. Blyden's book that the great, dumb, dark continent, has at last begun to speak, and in tones which... even those who most differ from his conclusions will be glad to listen to and wise to ponder.... In their pathos and passion, their patriotic enthusiasm and their philosophic calm, their range of sympathy and genuine reserve of power, they [the essays] will... arrest the attention of even the most casual reader. If ever anyone spoke on his subject with a right to be heard, it is Mr. Blyden, and, for this simple reason, that his whole life has been a preparation for it...."[29]

Other critics praised without being so effusive: the reviewer in the Athenaeum thought it remarkable that the author, a Negro, could write so "clearly and feelingly" yet "without bitterness":[30] a correspondent

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[28] The Church Missionary Intelligencer (Nov. 1887), 650.

[29] R. Bosworth Smith, "Mohammedanism in Africa", Nineteenth Century XXII (Dec. 1887), 793.

[30] Athenaeum, No. 3122 (27 Aug. 1887), 267.

in the Times, Rev. J. Stephen Barrass, thought Blyden's book "may yet prove the greatest contribution of the age on the gigantic subject of Christian missions".[31]

Not unexpectedly, the most extended and the most vitriolic review of Blyden's book appeared in the Church Missionary Intelligencer.[32] Although admitting that "the essays hold their own well with the contribution usually supplied to our best English periodicals", the reviewer took violent exception to Blyden's high praise of Islam, and his contention that Roman Catholicism was less of an evil influence on Negroes than Protestantism; he further berated Blyden for "hymning the praise of Liberia" and "running amuck of all that made him what he is". While it is undoubtedly true that Blyden's picture of Islam in Africa was of too rosy a hue, the C.M.S. reviewer had adopted the traditional attitude of contempt to Islam and made no attempt to understand why that religion should be so attractive to a highly intelligent Negro. To the further chagrin of the C.M.S., Blyden's point of view on Islam was "produced indiscriminately, sometimes almost verbatim" by Canon Isaac Taylor at an Anglican Church Conference held at Wolverhampton in November 1887.[33] The wholehearted endorsement of Blyden's views on Islam by "a respectable beneficed clergyman of the Church of England" raised "a storm which raged in the Church pages,

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[31] Times, 4 Aug. 1887.

[32] C.M.S.Intelligencer (Nov. 1887), 649-666.

[33] C.M.S.Intelligencer (Dec. 1887), 713.

the Times, and the Reviews for weeks and even for months".[34] In this way Blyden's book received invaluable publicity, and the first edition of five hundred copies was quickly sold out necessitating a second edition.

Blyden was, of course, delighted at the attention which his book commanded. "The United States was much older than Liberia when it was asked with a sneer: who reads an American book?",he wrote with pride to Coppinger.[35] But for him the most important result of "the generous reception" given to his book

> "was that it would convince the intelligent Negro youth, first, that in the Republic of Letters... there is no such thing as caste; and secondly, that if any man, whatever his race has anything to say worth listening to, men of all races who think will give him more than a respectful hearing."[36]

In the preface to the second edition Blyden took the opportunity of expressing his regret that the C.M.S. reviewer had spent much of his review bringing charges against Islam "when the necessity was so pressing for a careful consideration of the elements in the methods of foreign Christian workers in Africa which prevent wider and more permanent results". And if he had hymned the praise of Liberia it was because

> "That Republic represented two principles for which, in common with all intelligent Christian Negroes, he should contend: First, the return of the exiled African from the house of bondage; and, secondly, Christian Negro autonomy in Church and State on African soil."[37]

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[34]Grogan, Reginald Bosworth Smith, 151. One result of this discussion was to "rouse the C.M.S. to renewed activity" in West Africa. Blyden to Coppinger, 23 Jan. 1888. cf. C.M.S.Intelligencer, Dec. 1887, 715.

[35]Blyden to Coppinger, 13 Oct. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 2.

[36]Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race, see preface to the second edition.

[37]Ibid.

West Africans were, of course, delighted by the success of Blyden's book, but the claim of Samuel Lewis that it gave "eloquent expression and emphasis to the sentiments and aspirations of every enlightened member of his race" was not at all true: the majority of westernized educated West Africans did not share his predilection for Islam, and some were unhappy about his severe criticisms of Christian missions.[38] Those who were prepared to follow him were disappointed that he gave no firm lead: although he had left the Presbyterian Church,and was praising Islam more than ever, he avoided the last step of becoming an adherent of that faith.

At any rate, the publication of Blyden's book and the entire Centennial celebrations seemed to have succeeded in stimulating pride in things African in Sierra Leone. This bore immediate fruit in the form of a few individuals discarding their European names for African ones, or adding hyphenated African names to their existing European surnames, and also in the formation of the Dress Reform Society whose task was to recommend the design for an appropriate "national" dress. One of the first to change his name was W. J. Davies, the first African from Sierra Leone to get the B.A. degree from London University. From August 1887, he assumed the name of Orishatukeh Faduma.[39] This excited considerable comment because the names Orisha-tukeh were connected with two heathen Yoruba gods; and most Creoles

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[38] See, for instance, C. T. O. King to Coppinger, 17 Dec. 1886, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 23, Pt. 2. King, Sierra Leonean-born Mayor of Monrovia commenting on Blyden's defects as a leader wrote in part: "The worst is: he advocates polygamy for the race and Mohammedanism for its religion".

[39] Methodist Herald, V (24 Aug. 1887).

thought this a calculated affront to Sierra Leone Christians.[40] The idea of name changing soon degenerated into a farce: many of those who did, replaced their former names by ones which were not necessarily African.[41]

The first move in the attempt to replace European dress by a "national" African dress was made on 23 May when twelve scions of the leading families of Freetown met at the home of J. H. Spaine, Colonial Post-master, and there formed the Dress Reform Society "to determine and adopt a form of dress that would be more suitable to the requirement of the climate; a form that would at the same time be airy, convenient, andeconomical, and that would tend to the better preservation of the health of all classes".[42] Blyden had given his blessings to the new venture. On 13 December 1887 members of the foundation group with a few new adherents met. Among those present were Blyden himself, James Johnson, who was in Sierra Leone on his way back to Lagos from England, and Rev. J. R. Frederick, an outstanding Afro-West Indian preacher. The secretary reported that it was the "gigantic" aim of the society "to devise a national dress for Africa". It was decided that a waist coat, collar and necktie were superfluous and inconvenient articles of clothing for the tropics. These were to be replaced by a modified form of the tunic to be used with a "very free and airy pair of breeches".[43] But the verbal encouragement of men like Blyden, Johnson and

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[40] Sierra Leone News, IV (24. Sept. 1887).

[41] Fyfe, History of Sierra Leone, 468.

[42] Methodist Herald, VI (21 Dec. 1887).

[43] Ibid.

Frederick was not translated into examples and this attempt at originality was widely ridiculed, bringing the efforts of the Dress Reform Society to nought.

The kind of cultural nationalism that Blyden was attempting to foster in Sierra Leone was having a much healthier manifestation in Lagos. Indeed, although the youngest of the British West African colonies, Lagos had become by the late 1880's the most progressive of them and Blyden began to look upon it as a possible new centre for West African nationalism, and he himself was to spend much time there in the 1890's. But before we discuss Blyden's activities there, it is necessary to give a brief historical sketch of the colony. In the 1840's Lagos was a flourishing centre of the slave trade in West Africa. It was to stamp out the slave trade and permit the growth of legitimate trade that the British had directly intervened in Lagos affairs in 1851. And what since then had virtually amounted to a protectorate officially became so in 1861. Under a British protectorate and as a centre for legitimate trade, Lagos began to attract liberated Africans from Sierra Leone, who, nostalgic for the country of their birth, had since 1839 trekked back to such centres as Abeokuta and Badagry. The line of communication which they opened between Sierra Leone and Yorubaland was followed by traders, missionaries and government officials.

In Lagos the liberated Africans from Sierra Leone (Saros) plus Negroes from Brazil and Cuba had by 1865 formed about one-fifth of the population of the island.[44] These were, for the most part, literate and skilled, and

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[44]Jean Herskovit, Liberated Africans of Lagos Colony to 1886, 175.

as traders, artisans, government officials, teachers and missionaries, they formed the enlightened and progressive elements of the Lagos community. Not surprisingly, they sought political power commensurate with their commercial and social success. Indeed the Saros were strong supporters of the view of the 1865 Parliamentary Committee that Africans were to be trained to assume the management of their own affairs. In the late 1860's and early 1870's they sent petitions to the Secretary of State demanding representation on the Lagos Legislative Council. This resulted in the appointment to this Council in 1872 of J. P. L. Davies and George Hutchinson, two successful traders; but in 1874 the Lagos Legislative Council was abolished when, due to a policy of retrenchment, the colony was administered as part of the Gold Coast.

The Saros and Amaros were dissatisfied with the new political arrangement and campaigned for the separation of Lagos from the Gold Coast and the reestablishment of its Legislative Council with an increased African majority. In addition, they demanded an increase in the number of qualified Africans in the government service, and an end to discrimination against Africans within that service. In order that Africans could be trained for responsible positions, they wished to see the Government greatly increase the educational facilities. It was to voice these nationalist demands that newspapers sprang up in Lagos in the early eighteen eighties.[45]

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[45] Lagos's first newspaper The Anglo-African (1862-65) was published by Jamaican-born Robert Campbell. Fifteen years elapsed before another was founded: in July 1880 the Lagos Times and Gold Coast Colony Advertiser was started by R. B. Blaize, a prominent Saro trader; in February 1882, another Saro, J. B. Benjamin started the Lagos Observer, and in March 1882, the Eagle and Lagos Critic was founded by Owen Emerick Macaulay, grandson of Bishop Crowther.

In 1886 Lagos again became a separate colony, and was fortunate in having as its new governor Alfred Moloney, who had already had thirteen years of colonial service on the West Coast of Africa and was known to be enlightened and progressive. Yielding to the pressures of Africans, Moloney appointed two of them to the reconstructed Legislative Council of Lagos - James Johnson, Blyden's old friend, and C. J. George, a successful Saro trader. His governorship was notable for "his remarkable exertion in the cause of Lagos trade and the economic development of West Africa".[46] To foster the one he used tact and diplomacy in extending the Lagos protectorate over Yorubaland; to encourage the other he set up a system of model farms and Botanical Gardens where seeds and plants of tropical produce were made available; and he sought actively to encourage the emigration of Brazilian Negroes to Lagos, for skilled agriculturists and artisans as they were, he saw them as invaluable agents in his scheme for economic development, and, more generally, as civilizing agencies.[47] He believed that there was a possibility of a vast increase of trade and general intercourse between Negro Brazil and British West Africa. Partly as a result of his encouragement the steamship "Biafra" of the British and African Steamship Company made in 1889/90 two trips to Brazil bringing back to Lagos

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[46] A. A. B. Aderibigbe, Expansion of the Lagos Protectorate, 1863-1900, (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, London), 123.

[47] Ibid. Chapter Two discusses Moloney's policy of Economic Development. For original correspondence pertaining to Moloney's attempt to foster trade and intercourse between West Africa and Brazil see, C.O. 147/60/18250, Moloney to Sir H. T. Holland, 4 August 1887, enc. 1-8; C.O. 147/46/18014, Moloney to Knutsford, 14 Aug. 1890, enc. 1-16; also, Methodist Herald, V (24 Aug. 1887), and VI (30 Sept. 1885).

Negro emigrants, but for want of a British Government subsidy this run was discontinued.

Blyden who had won the friendship of Moloney encouraged him in his progressive views. Indeed, while on his way to Lagos from the Gambia in December 1885, Moloney called upon Blyden in Sierra Leone to discuss with him ideas for the development of that colony, among them the encouraging of Brazilian emigrants and the promoting of industrial training for Africans by starting model farms, and workshops.[48] In the summer of 1889 while in England on his way to the United States, Blyden was the guest of Governor Moloney at his home in Richmond, Surrey, and helped him to excite British interest in Brazilian Negro emigration to Lagos.[49]

Because Lagos had become the most progressive and nationalist-minded of the British West African territories, it is certain that at some time Blyden would have gravitated thither. But he made his first visit to Lagos in December 1890 under very special circumstances: a committee of fourteen Africans, mainly Saros, had invited him to give moral support to Africans in a dispute with Europeans in the Niger mission.[50] This dispute was, of course, reminiscent of that in Sierra Leone in 1871-73 but was much more serious: the grievances of the Africans were greater, their support among fellow Africans more widespread, their actions more determined. One outcome of the dispute was that in 1892 the Native Pastorate of the Delta

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[48]Blyden to Coppinger,18 Dec. 1885, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 22, pt. 2.

[49]Blyden to Coppinger, 6 July 1889, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 26.

[50]Edward W. Blyden, The Return of the Exiles and the West African Church, (London, 1891), see Appendix.

declared its independence and for three years severed all connections with the Church Missionary Society.

It is perhaps necessary to trace briefly the background to this dispute. The Niger Mission, virtually founded by Samuel Crowther, had been under his supervision as Bishop since 1864, and was run almost wholly by an African staff. Africans were especially proud of the Delta Mission which had grown to be the outstanding example of the effectiveness of Bishop Crowther's missionary method and of the splendid work done by African missionaries unaided by Europeans.[51] By 1890 there were three flourishing churches at each of the mission's main centres: Bonny, New Calabar, Okrika, Opobo and Benin; Bonny was so advanced as to have its own cathedral. The four main clergymen in the Delta mission: D. C. Crowther, son of the Bishop; James Boyle, John D. Garrick, and Walter E. Carew had all been associated with the mission almost from the start. But from 1878 the parent committee of the C.M.S. began to feel that the Niger Mission was laxly run, and thought that some sort of European supervision was necessary to improve its efficiency. Acting on this belief, the parent committee of the C.M.S. authorized periodic tours of the Niger Mission by Europeans who invariably reported adversely against it. In addition, Europeans who filled the newly created position of Secretary to the Niger Mission, held powers that rivalled that of Bishop Crowther. Africans were resentful of this new development which suggested that they could not succeed without direct European supervision.[52] The C.M.S., for its part, stung by Blyden's outspoken criticisms

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[51] See D. C. Crowther, The Establishment of the Niger Delta Pastorate, 1864-1892 (Liverpool, 1907); E. M. T. Epelle, The Church in the Niger Delta (Niger Delta Diocese, n.d.); also Ajayl, Christian Mission and the Making

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of their work in his book, was more determined than ever to tighten their control and bring about some sort of reform. This was bound to lead to friction between Europeans and Africans.

The first open clash between the two groups came in 1890. In that year a party of nine European missionaries led by J. A. Robinson and Graham Wilmot Brooke, two able, zealous but misguided young men, went out to the Niger avowedly on a reforming crusade. The party acted with fanatical ruthlessness and with complete disregard for the feelings or the authority of Bishop Crowther: their actions seemed a vindictive answer to Blyden's harsh criticisms of the work of the C.M.S.: several African agents were adjudged unfit and were summarily dismissed or suspended; of fifteen ordained African ministers, twelve were disconnected; at Lokoja, Brooke, in a demonstration of puritanical excess intended to cloak his contempt for Africans, accused all the Christians of fornication, pronounced public excommunication on the entire church congregation, and demanded public confession of sin before members could be reinstated.[53]

Such high-handed action on the part of the Europeans infuriated the Africans, both clerical and lay, and the first showdown came at a series of meetings of the Finance Committee held between 18 and 29 August at which Bishop Crowther and his two archdeacons, D. A. Crowther and J. Boyle, con-

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(cont.) of Nigeria, 499-507, and Webster, The African Churches of Yorubaland, 20, 44.

[52]C.M.S. G3/A3/04, J. Boyle to R. Lang, 5 Nov. 1890.

[53]Webster, African Churches of Yorubaland, 29.

fronted the Europeans. The Bishop protested against the dismissal of Africans on trivial charges without even being allowed to defend themselves.[54] But the Europeans with "no respect for his age or position", rode roughshod over the Bishop. The meeting culminated with F. N. Eden, who had been appointed Secretary of the Lower Niger and Delta region, overstepping his powers, and suspending Archdeacon Crowther for "untruthfulness". The Europeans had created a crisis in the Niger Mission.

The Africans were not prepared to submit meekly to this European effrontery. The whole West African community of Christians were incensed by "the insulting treatment" meted out to the venerable and highly-esteemed Bishop Crowther. A flood of letters of protests from individuals, church congregations and mass meetings was sent to the parent committee of the C.M.S. In Lagos a mass meeting of ministers and laymen of the three Christian denominations of the colony - Church of England, Wesleyan and Baptist - held on 24 October, decided on a letter of protest to the parent committee of the C.M.S. In this letter they complained about the "insult" inflicted on Bishop Crowther and his assistants, and saw this as "a direct affront and insult to the whole African Church and the Negro Race".[55] They wondered whether the authority of Bishop Crowther was less than that of a European bishop because he was Negro, and whether the action of the European missionaries was designed to bring about his resignation. Forty-seven

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[54] C.M.S. G3/A3/04, Crowther to Secs. of the C.M.S., 29 Aug. 1890.

[55] C.M.S. G3/A3/04, J. L. S. Davies, Chairman of Lagos Public Meeting, Secs. of the C.M.S., 24 Oct. 1890.

of the most prominent Africans of Lagos signed this letter. In Freetown, Sierra Leone, a similar meeting was held at which a similar letter of protest was drawn up and forwarded to the parent committee of the C.M.S. Ninety-four signatures were attached to this letter, among them those of such well-known Sierra Leoneans as A.T.Porter, Samuel Lewis, J.T.Sawyerr, J.H.Thomas and J. R. Frederick.[56]

This, then, is the background to Blyden's first visit to Lagos. The outcome of the clash between Europeans and Africans was still to be decided, and he had come to ensure an African victory. On 24 December, four days after his arrival, the committee of fourteen Africans who had invited him to Lagos gave him a formal welcome. In late December at the closing exercises of the Mqjola Agbebi Baptist School, Blyden made his first public comments on the Niger crisis in a lecture entitlted "The Question of the Day", which, unfortunately, does not seem to have survived.[57] His next major pronouncement was made on 2 January at a large meeting presided over by Governor Moloney in the Breadfruit School House. Blyden unequivocally urged the setting up of an independent African Church with Bishop Crowther at its head. Blyden, like other West African Christians, held the Bishop in the highest regard. "Bishop Crowther", he told his audience, "must always stand first in the history of any Native Church, whatever form it may take. The name must ever be honourably identified

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[56] C.M.S., G3/A3/04, Petition from Sierra Leone Christians to the Parent Committee of the C.M.S., Nov. 1890.

[57] For the information in this sentence I am indebted to Dr. James B. Webster, lecturer in history at the University of Ibadan.

with the history of West African Christianity."[58] Blyden advised that "this present (ecclesiastical) arrangement with its foreign props and support, its foreign stimulus and restraints" must be replaced by an arrangement where Africans were completely in control. European missionaries, even when they were well-meaning contrived to do more harm than good because of their intolerance and arrogance in dealing with Africans. Countering the European charge that Africans did not scrupulously conform to the Christian practices they were taught, Blyden pointed out that Constantine, the first Christian emperor, was "half-pagan to the end", and that the success of the early Church was due to its genius for assimilation and accommodation in doctrines and rituals. He urged:

> "We must seek to bring into the Native Church the Chiefs and other men of influence. Do not expect of them the perfection which a narrow philanthropy exacts.... Had the hard conditions now imposed upon African Chiefs been required of European sovereigns and chiefs, Christianity might never have been permanently established on the west of the Bosphorus."[59]

Blyden warned that there would be native and foreign opposition to the establishment of an independent African church, and that such an institution was bound to face tremendous initial difficulties. His admonitions are worth quoting extensively:

> "Of course, in the new movement, there will be among the more conservative here, as elsewhere, apprehensions as to the results of change. How it will strike foreigners! How it will

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[58] Edward W. Blyden, The Return of the Exiles and the West African Church, (London, 1891), 21.

[59] Ibid., 27.

affect ourselves! Well, the fact is, we shall never learn to swim until we venture into the waters.... I have not the slightest doubt that, in forming an independent church, there will be at first much that is unsatisfactory. We shall probably be misgoverned; the work will at times be neglected; our finances will be mismanaged. Some who watch on the walls may go to sleep when the hour demands unsleeping vigilance; but here again we should be learning by experience. We might be often hampered by the thought of the clumsy and blundering figure we present to the world. We might be worried by the suspicion that our enemies are marking and recording all our shortcomings. We should be certain to go through a period of difficulties, when sympathy would be with our enemies, not with us; but we should be gaining patience and experience, and acquiring by labour, by trial, by suffering, by self-denial, a possession which we can transmit as our own to our children. We should also be able to deal with them as we have not the power to do now with delinquents and those whose defects and vices trouble the Church and hinder her prosperity. But in this new enterprise we shall not be taking a leap in the dark. There are lights and landmarks to encourage and stimulate us. Bishop Crowther and his able and persistent fellow-workers on the Niger have laid the foundation of an African Church.... That institution of loftiest promise - the Native Pastorate - the apostolic fervour and zeal and abundant labours of your own James Johnson, show you the possibilities of the native for indigenous and independent work.

But while the church should be Native, we do not mean that it should be local. We want to drop the conventional trappings of Europe, but we do not wish to localise religion. I mean to say that we do not wish to give it any tribal colouring or bias....

The West African Church should be an African, not an English production. With Bible in hand, its framers should arrange for the suppression of whatever has hindered truthfulness in the people. The great incubus upon our development has been our unreasoning imitation. This we must try to avoid. But do not run to the other extreme of avoiding what is foreign simply because it is foreign. There are many good things in foreign customs - many useful things, many precious things, not only conducive and helpful, but indispensable to a healthy Christian growth. These we must find out and cherish. We must have a church which will have the affection of the people and the reverence of generations - in which we may feel communion with all God's saints of old, at present and to come. So that with all His people we can embody in song ... in English or Yoruba, in Ibo or Nupe, those beautiful Christian sentiments....

> In the establishment of your Church or schools there will be danger of exciting jealousy or opposition on the part of the foreigner.... But you must expect opposition and even conflict. These are no sign or cause of weakness.
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> ... What to us in the recent events on the Niger seems a strange and calamitous proceeding, is in reality the unfolding of the mighty purpose of God for Africa, and His purposes, we know, are always wise and beneficient."[60]

Blyden's call for the establishment of a West African church was eminently sensible: he had highlighted the difficulties and stressed the responsibility involved in setting up such an institution; he had utilized the crisis in the Niger mission to encourage common action by West Africans.

He remained in Lagos only until 13 February. During this time he continued to encourage steps which would lead to the formation of a non-denominational West African church. The idea was discussed by the clergy and laity at interdenominational meetings held at St. Paul's parsonage under the chairmanship of James Johnson. One of these meetings carried a resolution instructing Johnson to draw up a constitution and a statement of doctrine to be circulated among the clergy and laity for their comments and approval. The Basis of Union was drawn up by James Johnson and Henry Johnson, who had been dismissed in the Niger purge. It was agreed that upon a signal from James Johnson, all the ministers of Lagos should switch pulpits and declare the inauguration of a West African church.[61]

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[60]Blyden, The Return of the Exiles and the West African Church, 25-32.

[61]Webster, African Churches of Yorubaland, 122.

But Johnson seemed to have second thoughts about so forward a move: he never gave the signal.

If Johnson recoiled from attempting to sever West African churches from their foreign connections, the C.M.S., for its part, were still not prepared to show sympathy or regard for African opinion. A special subcommittee had been appointed by the C.M.S. to consider the controversy as far as they could from the letters of Europeans and Africans on the Niger, but its recommendations, endorsed by the parent committee, did little to mollify the Africans: for although most of the Africans dismissed or suspended were reinstated, European missionaries made no apologies to Bishop Crowther, nor did the parent committee do so on their behalf. Besides, the subcommittee had recommended the strengthening of the system of European supervision on the Niger: not only was each of the two sections of the mission to continue to have a European Secretary and Assistant Secretary "responsible for the general maintenance of the work"; in addition, all training of native youth was to be exclusively in European hands.[62]

To West African Christians this was a deliberate attempt on the part of the C.M.S. to compound its insult to the Negro race. Already had come from Sierra Leone the advice that "steps should be taken to relieve the C.M.S. of the Delta Mission".[63] Sierra Leoneans pledged themselves to make financial sacrifices for the cause. When the recommendations of the

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[62] C.M.S. G3/A3/05, Private and Confidential, Report of the Special Niger Sub-Committee.

[63] C.M.S. Gs/A3/L3, J. J. Sawyerr, W. C. Betts and J. H. Thomas to Bishop Crowther, 17 March 1891.

C.M.S. were known, the "Christian gentlemen" of Lagos met on 17 and 20 April under the chairmanship of James Johnson and resolved "that the new arrangements for the future conduct of the Mission [were] a practical announcement against the efficiency of the Episcopal Supervision of our much revered friend Bishop Crowther, the founder of that Mission under it and of the subordinate leadership of the native ministry", that, further, it reduced Bishop Crowther's episcopal authority "to a mere shadow and held up the native ministry to the world as incapable of working without European supervision", and therefore militated against "the healthy growth of self-reliance and manly independence" among Africans.[64] It seemed as though by this time the goal of an independent West African Church was no longer seriously kept in view, but the men of Lagos, too, recommended independence for the Delta Pastorate and were prepared to support it financially. They reported to Crowther that they themselves were willing to subscribe £350 annually "subject to reduction", and that other West African Christians had already pledged £700.[65] Of course, the clergy and congregation of the Delta mission were fully in favour of gaining their ecclesiastical independence. Although unhappy about the rift, Crowther felt compelled to endorse the scheme. On 8 May he wrote to the parent committee of the C.M.S. announcing the decision "to relieve the C.M.S. of the

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[64] C.M.S. G3/A3/05, Resolutions Proposed and adopted ... at a meeting of a few Christian gentlemen held at Breadfruit Parsonage... on 17 and 20 April.

[65] Ibid., Johnson to Crowther, 21 April 1891.

financial responsibility of the Delta district of the Niger mission in accordance with Venn's plans".[66] The 1st January 1892 was the date fixed for the independence of the Delta pastorate.

The parent committee of the C.M.S. seemed taken by surprise. Secretary Wigram remonstrated that the action of the committee was dictated by a desire for "the spiritual welfare" of Africans, and that "experience in the past not only in West Africa but India and elsewhere shew that the cooperation of Europeans is needful".[67] But arguments about the indispensableness of Europeans could hardly win over supporters of the Delta pastorate. Bishop Crowther replied that the decision had been forced upon Africans by "the words and actions of the European missionaries" on the Niger and was now irrevocable.[68] The C.M.S. committee wavered between immediately replacing Crowther by a European as Bishop on the Niger with the exception of Delta, or of making further attempts to persuade the Africans to forgo their plan for an independent pastorate in the Delta. The latter course prevailed. On 5 November the committee sent a telegram to Crowther requesting him to defer the formation of the Delta church.[69] Shortly thereafter, a two-man committee, Rev. J. Hamilton and Rev. W. Allen, was sent out to investigate the dispute on the spot and to make recommendations.[70] They arrived at Lagos on 20 December, but after only a few meetings

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[66] C.M.S., G3/A4/05, Crowther to Sec. of the C.M.S., 8 May 1891.

[67] C.M.S. G3/A3/L3, Fred. E. Wigram to Johnson, 15 June 1891.

[68] C.M.S. G3/A4/05, Crowther to Sec. of the C.M.S., 10 Aug. 1891.

[69] C.M.S., G3/A3/L3, C .M.S. telegram to Crowther, 5 Nov. 1891.

[70] Ibid., Instructions of the C.M.S. Committee delivered on 17 Nov. to Ven. Archdeacon J. Hamilton and Rev. W.Allen proceeding to the Niger Mission as a Deputation from the Committee.

with him, Bishop Crowther died on 31 December, his end undoubtedly hastened by the bitter dispute. Ironically, the venerable and beloved African was buried on the very day he had intended to declare an independent native church in the Delta.

If there was a chance that Bishop Crowther might succumb to the persuasion of the C.M.S. delegation, his death ensured that an independent African church would be formed in the Delta, partly as a memorial to him. On April 29, the Delta Church became independent.[71] The newly independent Delta church found no difficulty in raising adequate funds for its efficient administration, but on the initiative of the European bishops who had succeeded Crowther as head of the Niger mission, it consented to resume its connection with the C.M.S. in 1895 in a final and anti-climactic end to the Niger dispute.

Africans had failed to make the most of the Niger dispute. They had been united in their opposition to the Europeans, and out of this, as Blyden wished, could well have come a non-denominational West African church, but the clerical leaders, still too much swayed by European ties and opinions, hesitated to take the appropriate actions; perhaps, too, denominationalism had already taken too firm roots to ensure the success of such a church. For the laymen, despairing of irresolute clerical leadership, had taken the initiative in forming such a church: on 14 August 1891 W. E. Cole, Lagos merchant, called a meeting which saw the birth of the United Native African Church, but this organization never

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[71] C.M.S. Intelligencer and Record (June 1892), 455.

became effective: it was numerically weak, was dominated by the Baptists, and was "never sufficiently African".[72]

Blyden's wish for a non-denominational West African Church is indisputable. But whether he exerted himself as fully as he might on its behalf is questionnable. In the circumstances, the impulse, the initiative for such a church had to come from Lagos, and yet he left that colony after only a short stay and just at the time when the exertion of his influence might have ensured an unequivocal declaration for the establishment of independent West African Church. However, it must be recognized, too, that, because of his strong sympathy and support for Islam - a religion held in contempt by West African Christians - his influence among educated Christian Africans was not all it could have been.

Apart from his connection with the Niger dispute, what was Blyden's view of Lagos and its possibilities? His reputation had long preceded him to that colony, and he seemed to have been equally well-known by all sections of the community: on his arrival, delegations of Christians, Mohammedans, Brazilians and pagans had turned out to welcome him.[73] At his welcome party already he had noted and approved of the "close proximity and intimacy in which aborigines, pagans, Mohammedans and Christians live". This was unlike what obtained at Sierra Leone. Of the Saros he noted that "They had not lived here as islanders, but as part of a great

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[72] Webster, African Churches in Yorubaland, 128.

[72] Webster Sierra Leone Weekly News, VI (27 Dec. 1890).

continent, surrounded by their own people and connected with the more distant interior tribes, with whom they are in constant and unbroken intercouse".[74] In his first major address he spoke of Lagos as "one of the most hopeful spots in West Africa"; he had been "taken by exhilarating surprise when I entered the lagoon and witnessed the evidences of material growth ... the result of only thirty years of peaceful and judicious administration".[75] Blyden, who had not long returned from America, could not help making comparisons between Lagos and cities of the Southern United States. There was a resemblance in physical appearance: because of its black inhabitants, "its business-like appearance, as well as the novelty of everything - the newness of its improvements - Lagos might be called an American city in Africa". But for Blyden the comparison could not go much further: there was an important difference in the spirit and outlook of the two: there was about the latter "an air of depression and unrest ... a sullen acquiescence in their surroundings", while "the visitor sees in the people - in the openness of their countenance, the brightness of their eyes, the freedom of their movement - a fulness of life".[76] He had been impressed, too, by the fact that the people of Lagos had not only "retained their language but was sedulously cultivating it". Blyden saw the return of Brazilian

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[74]Blyden, The Return of the Exile and the West African Church, Appendix, 38.

[75]Ibid., 3.

[76]Ibid., 5.

Negroes as a happy augury for West Africa and praised Governor Moloney for his efforts at promoting an even greater number of Brazilian Negro emigrants. But the hopes he had for Lagos as a dynamic centre of West African nationalism was to be disappointed.

To Blyden, the failure of West Africans to seize the opportunity of establishing an independent West African Church was further proof of the inadequacy and incorrectness of their education. For him the "pressing need" of West Africans were at least two institutions of higher learning: the one for predominantly English-speaking West Africans, the other mainly for Mohammedans: in the one would be taught "literary" subjects, including Arabic, as well as "industrial" subjects; in the other, in addition to the Muslim curriculum, would be taught English and other western subjects. This educational plan was clearly intended to promote one of Blyden's novel ideas - cooperation between Christians and Muslims in the forging out of a West African community.

In Sierra Leone in the early 1890's, Blyden again engendered discussion of the idea of a West African University.[77] For him one of the main aims of education was to imbue the recipient with racial pride, a necessary prerequisite for valuable and devoted work on behalf of the race. Blyden expressed this viewpoint in a very important lecture entitled "Study and Race" delivered on 19 May 1893, at his residence on Free Street, to members of the Young Men's Literary Association of Sierra Leone.[78] Blyden's lecture would bear close study and extensive quotations

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[77] Lagos Weekly Record, IV (5 May 1894).

[78] Sierra Leone Times, (27 May, 1893). Summary and quotations in the following pages, unless otherwise stated, are taken from this source.

because nowhere else did he put so succinctly and so well his point that the "African Personality" - the first time to my knowledge that the phrase was used - must be cultivated by "correct" education.

The entire object of education, he contended, was to fit one for work on behalf of one's race and, through it, humanity:

> "The principle is, to consider what course will, as Bacon says, 'add to the glory of the Creator or the relief of man's estate....' For everyone of you - for everyone of us - there is a special work to be done - a work of tremendous necessity and tremendous importance - a work for the Race to which we belong. It is a great Race - great in its vitality, in its power of endurance, and its prospect of perpetuity. It has passed through the fiery furnace of centuries of indigenous barbarism and foreign slavery, and yet it remains unconsumed. Well, now, there is a responsibility which our personality, which our membership in the Race involves. It is sad to think that some Africans, especially among those who have enjoyed the advantages of foreign training, who are blind enough to the radical fact of humanity as to say 'Let us do away with the sentiment of Race. Let us do away with our African personality and be lost, if possible, in another Race....[79]
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> ... the duty of every man, of every race is to contend for its individuality - to keep and develop it. Never mind the teaching of those who tell you to abandon that which you cannot abandon....
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> Therefore, honour and love your Race. Be yourselves as God intended you to be or he would not have made you thus. We cannot improve upon his plan. If you are not yourself, if you surrender your personality, you have nothing left to give the world. You have no pleasure, no use, nothing which will attract and charm men for by suppression of your individuality, you lose your distinctive character.... You will see, then, that to

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[79] Blyden here was especially referring to the advice given by Joseph Renner Maxwell, Gold Coast-born Chief Magistrate of the Gambia, in his book, The Negro Question or Hints for the Physical Improvement of the Negro Race (London, 1892). In it he pleaded "for miscegenation to combine the beauty of the Caucasian with the fine physique and physical strength of the Negro". Blyden's lecture, "Race and Study" is to a large extent, his answer to Maxwell's plea.

> give up our personality, would be to give up the peculiar work and the peculiar glory to which we are called. It would really be to give up the divine idea - to give up God - to sacrifice the divine individuality; and this is the worst of suicides. We cannot compromise on this subject.

Blyden warned that the task of retaining and asserting the "African Personality" was a very difficult one:

> "... to retain Race integrity and Race individuality is no easy work in the hard, dogmatic and insurgent civilization in which we live. It has been said that the fringe of European civilization is violence. All the agencies at work, philanthropic, political and commercial are tending to fashion us after one pattern which Europe holds out. Society is calling upon us to be like the rest of its worshippers. All the books and periodicals we read, all the pictures we see beguile us. Everything says to us "Efface yourselves". It is difficult to resist these influences. Many are submerged and love to be submerged, not believing in any peculiar calling or any special work for the Negro."

Blyden's racialism is repugnant to an enlightened mid-twentieth century point of view, but it is worth noting that his was always a genuine, humanitarian racialism, with no sinister motives; to him it was the only alternative to cultural domination, and perhaps, physical absorption by the European.

Blyden also discussed his scheme for higher West African education at Lagos. He made his second visit to that colony on 17 April, remaining here until 13 July. Soon after his arrival he began to discuss the idea of a West African institution of higher learning with the leading Africans and the Governor, Sir Gilbert Carter. It was no coincidence that editorials on Education began appearing in the Lagos Weekly Record soon after his arrival in the colony; they were, in fact, written by Blyden himself, who was a close associate of the editor, John Payne Jackson. Jackson was

Liberian-born and received his High School education at Mt. Vaughan, Cape Palmas, under that race patriot, Alexander Crummell.[80] Regarding Liberia as unprogressive, and with restricted opportunities, Jackson left it for Lagos in 1880, and ten years later founded the Lagos Weekly Record, which was to become the most important propagator of early Nigerian nationalism.[81] Blyden was very much impressed by Jackson: he described him as "an able man" with "very strong race feelings".[82]

The Lagos Weekly Record of 5 May 1894 noted the need for a West African University:

> "We need African scholars.... The African scholar is one whose scholarship is imbued with racial ideas; the scholarly African is one whose racial feelings are diluted with foreign notions... and we have reason to believe that Sir Gilbert Carter will not be averse to the idea of the federation of the colonies for the establishment and development of the system of education now had in view by leading natives."[83]

But although Lagos was commercially prosperous, Blyden's scheme did not meet with the response he desired: the Africans of Lagos, like those at Freetown were divided by tribal and other loyalties which made cooperation for concerted action difficult. Blyden's disappointment was reflected in an editorial of the Lagos Weekly Record of 30 June:

> "We, in Lagos... live in constant pressure of tribal affinities. We know the difficulties and stumbling blocks, the

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[80] Blyden to Wilson, 25 Aug. 1897, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 27, Pt. 1.

[81] James Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkeley, 1963).

[82] Blyden to Wilson, 25 Aug. 1897, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 27, Pt. 1.

[83] Lagos Weekly Record, IV (5 May 1894).

> petty strifes and narrowness, engendered by what is sometimes dignified by the designation of "local politics", which is nothing more or less than the dark, contracted and undisciplined devotion to tribal ideas.... It is this besetting and obtrusive infirmity, which accounts, in no little degree, for the inability among us to engage continuously or successfully in any enterprise which requires organized effort."[84]

An editorial on 21 July 1894 further deprecated this lack of unity and public spirit among West Africans:

> "In the colonies of West Africa... with all the show and glitter there is very little civilization. The people still exist in separate and, as a rule, conflicting atoms.... There have been cases of individual success on pecuniary lines, but they stand apart in unfruitful and unproductive isolation, so far as the public interests are concerned. The town or city in which they live derive no advantage from their intelligence or economical skill.... They may be described as poverty-stricken rich men, for they are unable to help themselves or to help others, through lack of the powers of cooperation with their neighbours - of organization for constructive purposes."[85]

If Blyden was disappointed with the Christian Africans of Lagos, he found much to admire in the Mohammedans there. The new mosque, the opening of which he had come to witness, was evidence of Muslim munificence: its entire cost of three thousand pounds was borne by Mohammed Shitta, a Sierra Leonean-born merchant who had made a fortune in Lagos.[86] The mosque was officially opened by William H. Abdullah Quilliam, President of the Liverpool Muslim Association, on 5 July during the celebration of the great feast of Muharram. Blyden was no doubt impressed that deputations "consisting of sheikhs, kings and chiefs, the Imams and chief Ulemas

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[84] Lagos Weekly Record, IV (30 June 1894).

[85] Lagos Weekly Record, IV (21 July 1894).

[86] Lagos Weekly Record, IV (19 May 1894).

from all the Muslim communities on the West Coast of Africa and from many parts of the interior" were present.[87]

For Blyden and the Muslims one of the triumphs of the occasion was the official presence of Governor Carter and his public encouragement of Mohammedanism. Indeed, Blyden's ideas were clearly discernible in the Governor's speech. Carter, like his predecessor, Moloney, had served on the West Coast for many years before being appointed Governor of Lagos. During these years he had made the acquaintance of Blyden, and like Pope-Hennessy, had enthusiastically adopted the ideas of the Negro scholar. Some people might wonder, declared the Governor at the opening of the mosque, why he a Christian tolerated Mohammedanism: the answer was that religious dogmatism was unchristian and was, at any rate, "fatal to the religious progress of the African". The Governor further committed himself on what was a highly controversial subject: one of the main Christian objections to Islam was its practice of polygamy, but, he pointed out, that custom had "existed in Africa from time immemorial and seemed well-adapted to the needs of the people".[88] Christianity, he warned, had no chance of becoming an effective force in Africa so long as it refused to recognize polygamy as a wholesome social institution: European missionaries, if they would be successful, would do well to carefully study African customs and institutions. The Governor had advice, too

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[87] Lagos Weekly Record, IV (19 May, 1894).

[88] Lagos Weekly Record, IV (7 July 1894).

for the Muslims: "by all means continue to teach Arabic and the Koran, but do not blind yourself to the advantages of an English education". Governor Carter could not have reflected Blyden's ideas more faithfully or enthusiastically.

The mosque itself had been built by two Brazilian Negro emigrants - Senhores Martin and Porphyrio - and was "the finest specimen of ecclesiastical architecture in West Africa".[89] To the Lagos Weekly Record, the whole event was cause for immense pride:

> "No foreign hands reared those beautiful walls, that splendid dome, those graceful turrets. All is the work of the African. Where now is the taunt that the Negro can do nothing - that he will do nothing - that he cannot help himself? This is the noblest achievement with which the Negro of West Africa will mark the closing decade of the nineteenth century."[90]

At the request of Governor Carter, Blyden returned to Lagos on 9 March 1895, to assume the position of Agent for Native Affairs.[91] Blyden's duties were not very specific: his appointment was a special one and could only have been filled by someone of his prestige and influence. In his capacity of Agent for Native Affairs, Blyden, undaunted by its initial, cool reception, again promoted the idea of an institution of higher learning for West Africans. The "educational drama" enacted in Lagos in 1896 was almosg identical with that played in Sierra Leone in 1872-1873. After preliminary discussions with leading natives and the Governor, Blyden wrote his first formal letter to Carter on 14 May, pointing

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[89] Lagos Weekly Record, IV (7 July 1894).

[90] Ibid.

[91] C.O. 147/104, Carter to Chamberlain, 16 March 1896; Liberia Bulletin, No. 8 (Feb. 1896), 13.

out the disadvantages for Africans of a purely missionary education, or of education of Africans in Europe, and stressed the need for an institution of higher learning in West Africa.[92] Carter replied that he was very sympathetic to the idea, but warned that unless Africans took the initiative in founding such an institution no aid could be expected from the Government. In late May Blyden convened leading Africans at his residence; here a prospectus for the College was drawn up and the decision taken to launch a campaign for funds.[93]

This new educational project received publicity from all the West African newspapers. The Sierra Leone Weekly News recalled the attempt in 1872-1873 to found a Negro University and hoped that the new effort would be more successful.[94] The Lagos Weekly Record attempted to stir public interest by using the now familiar arguments against European missionary education.[95] A preliminary prospectus of an institution to be called "The Lagos Training College and Industrial Institute" was issued in mid-July

> "with a view of calling the attention of the Lagos and other portions of the West African public to the important effort now being made in behalf of Africa and the Negro race and to solicit their interest and cooperation in the way of donations and subscriptions towards the initiation of the scheme....

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[92] C.O. 147/110, Blyden to Carter, 14 May 1896, enc. 1 in Carter to Chamberlain, 3 Aug. 1896.

[93] Ibid., enc. 2: Blyden to Carter, 3 June 1896, also Lagos Weekly Record, VII (30 May 1896).

[94] Sierra Leone Weekly News XII (2 May 1896).

[95] Lagos Weekly Record, VII (2 May 1896).

> The object brought forward in this prospectus has a claim upon the public, not only because individual interest will be promoted by it and an enlightened national policy carried out, but because it is a scheme of comprehensive patriotism and benevolence, having in view the welfare of the Negro race everywhere.
>
> ... the establishment of this most desirable enterprise... is ... the most urgent need of the race."[96]

The Institution itself was to be comprised of a "literary" and an "industrial" department; in the former would be taught "ancient and modern languages, mathematics, history, mental and moral philosophy and natural science"; in the latter would be taught "various handicrafts and scientific and practical agriculture".

Governor Carter had duly transmitted his correspondence with Blyden to the Colonial Office. Its reaction was predictable: officials agreed with Carter that the "Lagos Government should support the scheme as far as possible and give financial assistance when it is ascertained that the natives are in earnest".[97] But the Colonial Office was confident that such a scheme would not succeed if left to African initiative. It was correct. In a letter of 10 November, a bitterly disappointed Blyden admitted to Governor Carter that he had failed to win adequate native support for his scheme, and expressed his disgust at

> "the lamentable incapacity of the people and their invincible apathy to anything but the accumulation... of money which they know not how to use."[98]

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[96] Liberia Bulletin, No. 9 (Nov. 1896), 81.

[97] C.O. 147/110/16219, Minutes by H. J. Read, 13 Aug. 1896.

[98] C.O. 147/107, Blyden to Carter, 10 Nov. 1896.

At the end of 1897 Blyden resigned as Agent for Native Affairs. The only success he achieved during his two year stay in Lagos was among the Mohammedans. He established among them the first school in which "western learning" was available to their children. This marked "a new epoch" in Lagos, because hitherto the Muslim population had resisted all attempts made to persuade them to accept training in English for their children.[99] All the teachers at the school set up by Blyden were Mohammedans, and the children retained their native dress and customs. So successful was this school that it was adopted as a model by other Mohammedan centres.

Blyden's next major effort at furthering West African education was in Liberia in 1900. But before this is discussed, it will be useful to examine his relationship with the Republic since his defeat at the Presidential election in 1885. For although he often felt compelled to separate himself from Liberia, his heart lay with it, and the divorce could never be complete. The love-hate relationship between Blyden and Liberia continued on both sides. Thus, on a visit to Liberia in October 1886 - his first since losing the Presidential election - the City Councillors of Monrovia, determined to prove that Republics were not always ungrateful, passed resolutinns of welcome and of appreciation of his services to the nation and to the race.[100] But even this harmless measure on Blyden's behalf was enough to cause dispute and dissension in

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[99] Lagos Weekly Record, IX (14 May 1898).

[100] Resolutions of Appreciation and Welcome Passed by the Common Council of Monrovia, 25 Oct. 1886, to Hon. E. W. Blyden, L.L.D., A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 23, Pt. 1, No. 105.

Monrovia. His opponents had resented this show of appreciation to Blyden and called a town meeting at which a vote of censure was passed on the town council and threats were made to burn him in effigy unless the resolutions were repealed.[101] Blyden, fearful of his safety, once more fled Monrovia. And yet on his return after a few weeks at Cape Palmas, he was offered the Presidency of Liberia College[102] by the Liberian Board of Trustees and the Presidential nomination of the Republican Party, both of which he prudently declined.[103]

On another visit to Liberia in 1888, after becoming the first Liberian to publish a major scholarly work, he was given a fittingly enthusiastic welcome. Even President Johnson felt compelled to bring about a reconciliation between himself and Blyden, who once again had easy access to the Presidential mansion. Ever on the look-out for signs of Liberia's progress, Blyden found it in "the increasing intelligence and prosperity of the aborigines, especially the Kroomen", who, in the election of May 1887, had all been allowed to vote for the first time, and had returned a representative, S. W. Seton, to the national legislature. He was further heartened to find that his close friend, C.T.O. King, Mayor of Monrovia, a native of Sierra Leone who had emigrated to the Republic in 1872, and had prospered, was being seriously mentioned

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[101] King to Coppinger, 13 Nov. 1886, Ibid.

[102] Blyden to Coppinger, 25 Jan. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 1.

[103] Address of the Committee of the Republican Party to Hon. E. W. Blyden, L.L.D., 14 Feb. 1887, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 24, Pt. 2, Blyden to the Committee of the Republican Party, Feb. 1887, Ibid.

as a candidate for the Presidency of the Liberian Republic. Blyden counselled the demure and reluctant King that he was well qualified for the position:

> "The work to be done does not require book learning so much as love of the work and comprehension of its necessities. The work to be done is one of organization - of marshalling the strength of the Republic which exists in the aborigines instead of despising and dissipating it."[104]

Blyden had anticipated that King's elevation to the Presidency would do much to attract to Liberia, able Africans from other parts of West Africa. But King regarded President Johnson as too formidable an opponent.

If Blyden wished to see a corps of educated natives at the helm of state in Liberia, he also wished to have the country abandon its republican form of government. Hitherto Blyden had been content to suggest reforms in Liberia's constitution but now he was doubting the efficacy for Liberia's purpose of a democratic form of Government. Blyden suggested that Liberia should be ruled by men of merit and lovers of their race who should continue in office as long as they fulfil their duties conscientiously, but he gave no indication as to how they should be removed if their rule was not in the interest of the country.

It was as a diplomat that Blyden was again to serve Liberia. In 1892, Joseph James Cheeseman, a former Superintendent of Baptist Churches in Liberia, was elected President, and reappointed Blyden as Liberia's ambassador to the Court of St. James. His main diplomatic objectives were to arrange for the liquidation of Liberia's foreign debts, and for the

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[104]Blyden to King, 8 Aug. 1888, A.C.S.Papers, Vol. 25, Pt. 2.

establishment of telegraphic communications between the Negro Republic and the outside world; and finally, to ratify a treaty of friendship and commerce between the Congo Independent State and Liberia.[105] On 14 May, accompanied by the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, Blyden presented his credentials as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the Republic of Liberia to Queen Victoria; and took this opportunity to offer her a copy of his book, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race.[106] As on his previous appointment as Liberian ambassador, Blyden moved freely in London's highest social circle, and used the many opportunities he got as a much sought-after lecturer, to interest and educate the British public about Liberia and Africa.

From 1892 until 1899 when he returned to help in the reorganization of Liberia College, Blyden made only short visits to Liberia, but on these occasions he continued to urge the Government to push into the interior and incorporate native Africans into the Liberian state.[107] On a visit in January 1897, Blyden was heartened to find that for the first time in its history, Liberians had elected a President who came from the rural districts - William David Coleman. Besides, the new legislature appeared progressive - it had passed legislation opening the coast, closed since 1864, to trading by foreigners, and Coleman had promised to pay systematic attention to the development of the interior. He saw these as hopeful

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[105] Lagos Weekly Record, 111 (24 Sept. 1892).

[106] Sierra Leone Weekly News, VIII (11 June, 1892).

[107] Liberia Bulletin, No. 9 (Nov. 1896), 84-86.

signs.

The celebration in July 1897 of fifty years of Liberian independence Blyden saw as a fitting occasion to further encourage fellow Liberians and hold up to them visions for the future:

> "There can be no doubt that the Liberian idea... is one of the divinely appointed means for the regeneration of Africa.... This new nation, if it grows normally, will develop new sentiments, new ideas, new forms, representing the African idea, and then the civilization now in vogue will seem what it is, a delusion and a snare, and only little better than rank barbarism.... The Liberian idea will be akin to this continent, not an imitation. In some respects it may be an adaptation, but upon the whole it will be a fresh, new growth; and there is sure to come when the proper education is developed and diffused, an African literature with the smell of Africa upon it, with African freedom, African thought, and African theology; for the African is not always to be an intellectual pauper; a pensioner of other lands doing nothing but importing foreign ideas and quoting foreign expressions...."[108]

It was because he strongly believed that African scholars had a distinctive contribution to make to world knowledge that Blyden had so readily responded to the call of an old associate, and the new President of Liberia, Garretson Wilmot Gibson, to return from Sierra Leone and help in the reorganization of Liberia College.[109] Under the new dispensation, the College was now largely financed by the Liberian Legislature, and its effective control no longer lay with the American Boards of Trustees. The College was reopened on 21 February 1900 with seven staff members including the President of the College, G. W. Gibson, and a librar-

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[108] Liberia Bulletin, No. 11 (Nov. 1897), 40-41.

[109] Blyden to Wilson, 1 June 1900, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 28, Pt. 2.

ian - a larger staff than it had ever had - and twelve students; there were forty-five students and two teachers in the Preparatory Department. Blyden was appointed Senior lecturer and it was he who delivered the inaugural address during which again he saw the role of the College in terms of understanding Africa and interpreting it to the world:

> "It ... will revolutionize the thoughts not only of the citizens of the Republic about themselves, but of other Africans, and of foreigners with regard to Africans. It will produce the Liberian scholars who will study and comprehend... Africa, who with that insight which a genuine sympathy gives, will understand the African in his native state, and know how to give the world a correct knowledge of him; who will be able to study native languages, native religion, native politics, the social and domestic life of the natives, their secret societies, and the effect of all things upon their social life. There is much in what we call their crudeness and superstitions that is educative. There is much in their government, in their religion, in their social customs, which we must study and understand, and take advantage of in order to live in this country."[110]

But Blyden's ideas of what African customs should be adopted by Liberians did not meet with the approval of other Liberian leaders. In January 1901, he replaced Gibson as President of the College, and in this capacity "taught students at the College the principles of Mohammedanism and polygamy".[111] The rest of the staff objected strongly to this. Annoyed that his staff only wished to have taught in the College the conventional western ideas, Blyden impetuously quitted the College in June 1901 - severing for all times his connection with it.

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[110] Liberia Bulletin, No. 17 (Nov. 1900).

[111] J. C. Stevens to J. O. Wilson, 18 June 1901, A.C.S. Papers, Vol. 28, Pt. 2.

Unable to work effectively among westernized West Africans, Blyden once again turned his attention to Muslims: on leaving his post at Liberia College, Blyden went to Sierra Leone where he was appointed Director of Mohammedan Education, a position he held for the next five years. But during this time and to the end of his life, it was as a propagator of cultural nationalism that Blyden made his biggest impact on West Africa. If there was no West African institution from which he could help to direct and encourage the study of African social life, he was quite prepared as writer and itinerant lecturer to urge this insistently upon educated West Africans.

By 1900, there were only two works by West Africans which could be said to be of a sociological nature: J. Augustus Cole's, A Revelation of the Secret Orders of West Africa (1886), and John Mensah Sarbah's Fanti Customary Laws (1897). Yet ironically, although Cole provided much useful sociological data in his book, he was mainly concerned to have the secret societies abolished because they were "in direct opposition to Christianity and contrary to the principles of morality and truth".[112] To Blyden, Cole's book was further proof of the Christian influence destroying pride of race among Africans. On the other hand, Sarbah's book, in Blyden's view, set an example for other educated West Africans. Sarbah and his associates in the Gold Coast had been "dissatisfied with the demoralising effects of certain European influences, [and was] determined

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[112] J. Augustus Cole, A Revelation of the Secret Orders of Western Africa, (Dayton, Ohio, 1886), 9.

to stop further encroachment into their nationality".[113] The purpose of his book was both to stimulate pride among Africans in their social institutions as well as provide European officials with "a correct picture" of native laws and customs, and thus facilitate their dealing justly with natives.

Blyden was anxious that more educated West Africans should write about social institutions. In an address to a High School in Monrovia, in 1899, he advised that

> "Africa must speak for herself and who is to be her spokesman, if not her educated sons? From among you must come men capable of studying Native law and preparing a paper upon it. You must write papers on tribal organization, on Native languages, on Native religions and politics. We must not be satisfied with simply ridiculing the superstitions of the aborigines. We must find out the philosophy of them. These papers must not be merely speculative but must be based on facts, and furnish examples of research and scholarship."[114]

Blyden omitted no opportunity to urge this view upon educated West Africans.

One West African whom Blyden thought exemplified the spirit of African assertion and independence for which he contended was Mojola Agbebi. Agbebi was one of the pioneers and leaders in the attempt in Yorubaland to found independent native churches: it was mainly through his instrumentality that the independent native Baptist Church of Lagos was founded in 1888. But Agbebi, like Blyden, wished to see established a

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[113] John Mensah Sarbah, Fanti Customary Laws (London, 1897), preface.

[114] Quoted in Georgina Gollock, Sons of Africa (London, 1928), 163.

unified West African Church. In 1901 his Church merged with the United Native African Church, and on the occasion of the first anniversary of the African Church of Lagos, Agbebi delivered a sermon which has been widely cited as a statement of early West African nationalism. In it, Agbebi echoed Blyden's ideas in stressing the need of a unified West African church untrammalled by the trappings of European sectarianism.[115] Blyden, "surprised and delighted", wrote to Agbebi expressing his wholehearted approval of his sermon:

> "This is the first instance I have known of a native African, racy of the soil, imbued with European culture, uttering views so radically different from the course of his training, but intrinsically African and so valuable for the guidance of his people. No one can write on the religion of the African as an African can... and you have written thoughtfully and with dignity and impressiveness.... 'Africa is struggling for a separatepersonality' and your discourse is one of the most striking evidence of this. The African has something - a great deal to say to the world - ... which it ought to hear and which it would be useful to hear."[116]

Another West African whom Blyden regarded as representative of "the West African Personality" was J. E. Casely Hayford. They had first made each other's acquaintance in Sierra Leone in the early 1870's when Hayford was a student at the Wesleyan's Boys' High School,[117] and Blyden was vigorously advocating cultural ethnocentrism. Blyden's ideas seemed

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[115] Rev. Mojola Agbebi, Inaugural Sermon (New York, 1903).

[116] Ibid., 17.

[117] David Kimble, A Political History of Ghana, 1850-1928 (London, 1963). 160, fn. 1.

to have made a great impression on Casely Hayford who became his life-long follower and probably his most devoted disciple. Hayford, like Sarbah, was a trained lawyer, and became active in the Gold Coast in defending the interest of the natives. In 1897 at the request of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society, Casely Hayford undertook a study of the social institutions of the western tribes of the Gold Coast for the practical purpose of opposing the Lands Bill of 1897 which invested in the Crown the right to administer public lands; through the efforts of Hayford and the A.R.P.S., the bill was repealed. In 1903, Hayford's researches were published in a book entitled Gold Coast Institutions, and in it he made a plea for the retention of wholesome native customs and institutions. Like Blyden, Hayford was especially critical of the "de-Africanizing influence" of European missionaries.[118]

If Hayford derived his inspiration from Blyden, he in turn encouraged his penurious mentor, and helped to ensure that his writings appeared in print: in 1905 Hayford made a substantial contribution towards the publications of lectures of Blyden which the Negro scholar had given in England in 1901 and 1903. In an introduction to the work, Hayford gave the most enthusiastic endorsement of his work and ideas that Blyden ever received:

> "The claims of Edward Wilmot Blyden to the esteem and regard of all thinking Africans rests not so much upon the special work he has done for any particular people of the African race, as upon the general work he has

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[118] J. E. Casely Hayford, Gold Coast Native Institutions (London, 1903), 105.

done for the race as a whole.

> The work of men like Booker T. Washington and W. E. Burghart Du Bois is exclusive and provincial in a sense. The work of Edward W. Blyden is universal, covering the entire race and the entire race problem.
>
> What do I mean? I mean this, that while Booker T. Washington seeks to promote the material advancement of the black man in the United States, and W. E. Burghart Du Bois his social enfranchisement amid surroundings and in an atmosphere uncongenial to racial development, Edward W. Blyden has sought... to reveal everywhere the African unto himself; to fix his attention upon original ideas and conceptions as to his place in the economy of the world; to point out to him his work as a race among races of men; lastly, and most important of all, to lead him back unto self-respect. He has been the voice of one crying in the wilderness of all these years, calling upon all thinking Africans to go back to the rock whence they were hewn by the common Father of the nations - to drop metaphor, to learn to unlearn all that foreign sophistry has encrusted upon the intelligence of the African."[119]

Blyden's own greatest single effort at "unfolding the African... through a study of the customs of his fathers, and also of assisting the European political overlord ruling in Africa, to arrive at a proper appreciation of conditions" was made in 1908 with the publication of his work, African Life and Customs,[120] which had first appeared as a series of articles in the Sierra Leone Weekly News. In this work he was concerned to show that there existed "an African Social and Economic System most carefully and elaborately organized, venerable, impregnable, indispensable".[121] He pointed out that the African social system was

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[119] Blyden, West Africa Before Europe, Introduction:

[120] Edward W. Blyden, African Life and Customs (London,1908).

[121] Ibid., preface.

socialist, cooperative and equitable - an ideal for which Europe was desperately striving as the answer to ills created by individualism and unscrupulous competitiveness; the European system bred "poverty, criminality and insanity", while "under the African system of communal property and cooperative effort, every member of a community has a home and a sufficiency of food and clothing and other resources of life and for life".[122] Many of the institutinns condemned by Europeans, he advised, were important and integral parts of the African social system: polygamy, for instance "operated to protect from abuse the functional work of the sex, and to provide that all women shall share normally in this work with a view to healthy posterity and an unfailing supply of population";[123] likewise African secret societies had important educative functions. The African was a pantheist and the most religious of men, and even his reputedly barbaric customs had a religious basis.

But if Blyden's plea for the retention of native customs and institutions had been stronger and more direct than ever before, it was also an indication of his almost complete alienation from the majority of educated West Africans who continued to believe that European culture and values were synonymous with being civilized, while conformity to African culture was a mark of the uncivilized. In the last six years of his life, spent mainly in Sierra Leone, he was, as usual needy and in poor health, and lived in comparative seclusion. To the last, too, his love-hate

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[122] Blyden, African Life and Customs, 37.

[123] Ibid., 11.

relationship with Liberia had continued: in 1905 the Liberian Government recognized his services to the Negro Republic by granting him a small pension but discontinued this in 1909 because the Government felt that Blyden "favoured British rule for Liberia".[124]

But there was for him some compensation in these last disconsolate years. In 1909, the Sierra Leone Government awarded him a sum of one hundred dollars "in recognition of his literary attainments".[125] His services on behalf of British West Africa were formally recognized in 1910 when the legislatures of Sierra Leone, Lagos and the Gold Coast voted to give him a joint yearly pension of seventy-five pounds.[126] But he probably derived his greatest satisfaction from the knowledge that in Casely Hayford he had found a worthy successor to carry on his work. The old pan-Negro patriot and the young West African nationalist maintained their friendship through regular correspondence. In 1911 Casely Hayford published his second book, Ethiopia Unbound, a rambling, semi-autobiographical work which, however, contained a sterling defense of African culture and a plea for cultural ethno-centrism. In it he paid admiring tribute to Blyden and his work:

> "[He was]... a god descended upon earth to teach the Ethiopians anew the way of life. He came not in thunder, or with sound, but in the garb of a humble teacher, a John the Baptist among his brethren, preaching rational and national Salvation. From

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[124] C.O. 267/521, Blyden to Probyn 14 March 1910.

[125] C.O. 267/511, Probyn to Crewe, 6 Jan. 1909.

[126] C.O. 267/521, Probyn to Crewe, 17 March 1910.

> land to land and shore to shore his message was the self-same one, which, interpreted in the language of Christ was: 'What shall it profit a race if it shall gain the whole world and lose its soul?'."[127]

From this work Blyden knew without doubt that his mantle had fallen on Casely Hayford. On 22 October 1911 he wrote to him:

> "The more I read 'Ethiopia Unbound', the more I see that it is not your book, but an inspiration. It has given me more joy and encouragement than anything I have seen for many years."[128]

When he died less than four months later his hopes were still buoyant that more Casely Hayfords would arise through whose efforts a West African community and state would be formed which would be progressive and yet retain wholesome elements of African Culture.

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[127] Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation (London, 1911), 163.

[128] Casely Hayford, The Truth About the West African Land Question (London, 1913), 113.

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1. Manuscripts in the United States.

(a) Papers of the American Colonization Society, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Apart from his own published writings, this is easily the most important source of material for any study of Blyden. This collection contains his regular correspondence with the Secretary of the American Colonization Society over a period of forty years. Copies of the Secretary's replies are also in this collection.

(b) Papers of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, 375 Riverside Drive, New York City.

This collection contains letters and memoranda written by Blyden to the Secretary of the Board between 1851 and 1882. This was not a continuous correspondence - there are sometimes gaps of years - but there are periods when it was regular. It is a useful supplement to the above.

(c) The Hemphill Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

(d) The John E. Bruce Papers, Schomburg Collection, Harlem Branch of the New York Public Library.

Both the above collections have a few relevant items.

2. Manuscripts in England.

(a) Anti-Slavery Papers, Rhode House Library, Oxford.

(b) Brougham Papers, University College, London.

(c) Gladstone Papers, British Museum Add. Mss.

(d) John Holt Papers, Liverpool.

(e) Lugard Papers, Rhode House Library, Oxford.

(f) Morel Papers, London School of Economics.

The above Papers contain a limited number of Blyden's letters - ranging from one in the Lugard Papers to a dozen in the Gladstone Papers.

(g) Papers of the West African Mission of the Church Missionary Society, Salisbury Court, London, E.C.1.

This is an important source - indispensable for a discussion of cultural nationalism in West Africa in the nineteenth century - a phenomenon which Blyden, more than any other West African, was responsible for fostering.

3. From the Public Record Office.

(a) C.O. 267. Governors' despatches from Sierra Leone.

(b) C.O. 147. Governors' despatches from Lagos.

Blyden was employed at different times for a period amounting to nine years by the British Government, seven of these at Sierra Leone, two at Lagos. His reports and letters are usually to be found as enclosures in the despatches of Governors.

(c) C.O. 806/46. African No. 82.

Contains letters by James Johnson and Bishop Cheetham relevant to the dispute between Africans and European missionaries in Sierra Leone in 1873-74.

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